Changes in the Tri-Partite Relationship Between Central Government, Local Government and Civil Society and its Implications for the Geography of the City:

The Effects of Developments in Public Education Management on School Catchments in the Glasgow Division of the Former Strathclyde Region 1990-96

PhD Thesis

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Declaration

This thesis embodies the results of original research carried out by the author. Reference to existing works are made as appropriate.

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Abstract

Through examination of changes in Education management during the 1980s and 1990s, the study focuses on analysis of the factors altering the nature of the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. From the Education perspective, it assesses aspects of the power differential between each of these "parties", concluding that there has been a direct and indirect reduction in the autonomy and accountability of local government as a result of changes in its traditional roles, mandate and responsibilities.

The fieldwork focuses on Education management within the Glasgow Division of the former Strathclyde Region. The views of senior Scottish Office and Regional Council officials are considered in light of an extensive review of the relevant literature and secondary statistics to set the context for the research. The fieldwork explores the implications of such changes on non-denominational secondary provision within the city, focusing on the particular experiences of five study schools drawn from a notional hierarchy of public provision. The views of the head teachers, parent school board members and parents are surveyed and analysed to relate actual experience to the broader theoretical considerations discussed in the opening contextual chapters. Consideration is given to the implications of the findings on particular locales and the overall socio-political geography of the city. The relevance of the findings is abstracted and applied at a more general level.

The study acknowledges the important context of the broader social and ideological dynamism which frames the activity of government and influences the behaviour of civil society. Against this backdrop, it concludes that these broader factors (predominantly the New Right ideology of central government in the 1980s and 1990s and a purported move from Fordism to post-Fordism) have interacted with local circumstances to produce complex spatially-manifested patterns of access, expectation and opportunity effecting the life chances of individuals within and between different locales. As a result, "Professional" groups in each locale are more able and likely to access information, influence and service goods than those "residual" households at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. The concentrations of these "residual" groups in more deprived locales gives these trends a spatial manifestation, affirming *and* altering aspects of the socio-political geography of the city.

The research concludes that proposed central and local government initiatives in governance and public service provision would further impinge on the socio-political geography of the city if the traditional links between locale and expectation are challenged and additional powers are transferred from local government. It suggests that whilst changes may be seen to be radical, the *status quo* limits the expectations and opportunities of excluded groups and prevents broader community empowerment. The study closes by arguing that aspects of the various theories of local government continue to remain relevant and that exponents of each will have to "compromise" in the face of the competing demands of each party in the complex tri-partite relationship.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

"New local government has recognised that power - real power to change and influence the social problems of locality - is found not in the town hall but in civil society beyond its walls ... Power resides out there in society - what local government has is some money, a bit of regulation and some ability to organise and lead" .

(Corrigan 1997, p.15-16).

Civil society formally gives government its mandate through the ballot box and fiscal contributions. It informally presses for change at a national and local level through lobbying, the media, opinion and voting poll feedback, participation and the detail of its day to day contact with the institutions and bureaucracy of the state. Civil society's growing awareness and expectation of government and its evolving ability to articulate its needs and demands have been important factors influencing the empowerment of local communities since the 1970s (Walsh, 1989). This has occurred most notably in the local government sphere. The decentralisation of control of many elements of local authority activity has taken place at the same time as the loss of local government autonomy and discretion to central government[1] (Midwinter, 1984; Stoker, 1991; Isaac-Henry, 1997). A dynamic tri-partite relationship has developed as a result.

Through examination of public participation in Education decision-making, this study focuses on analysis of the factors changing the nature of this tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. It assesses aspects of the power differential between each of these "parties", exploring

[1] e.g. through the increased imposition of national standards/central government regulation or the removal of services - such as Further Education or Water and Sewerage - from local government control.

shifts in patterns of accountability associated with changes in the envisaged roles, mandate and responsibilities of local government. It considers the context of the broader socio-economic and ideological dynamism which frames the activity of government and influences the behaviour of civil society. Specifically, the study explores the extent to which these broader factors (predominantly a purported move from Fordism to post-Fordism and the New Right ideology of central government in the 1980s and early 1990s) interact with local circumstances to produce complex spatially-manifested patterns of access, expectation and opportunity effecting the life chances of individuals within and between different locales. These dynamic relationships and the theories of local government which underpin academic and ideological thinking are outlined in Figure 1.1. They are introduced in detail in the first two chapters of the thesis.

Civil Society

As Raab and Arnott (1995) indicate, "civil society is difficult to describe: recent academic interest in the concept has not settled on an unambiguous meaning or on the concrete institutions to which it refers. For some, civil society refers to societal institutions outside the state: families, households, neighbourhoods. For others, it is the world of interest groups, self help associations and voluntary organisations" (p.6). In this study, civil society is defined as encapsulating both of the above definitions and the media. It is considered to exist and influence collectively (but not necessarily consistently) at a local and national level, pointing to the relevance of the tri-partite perspective highlighted earlier.

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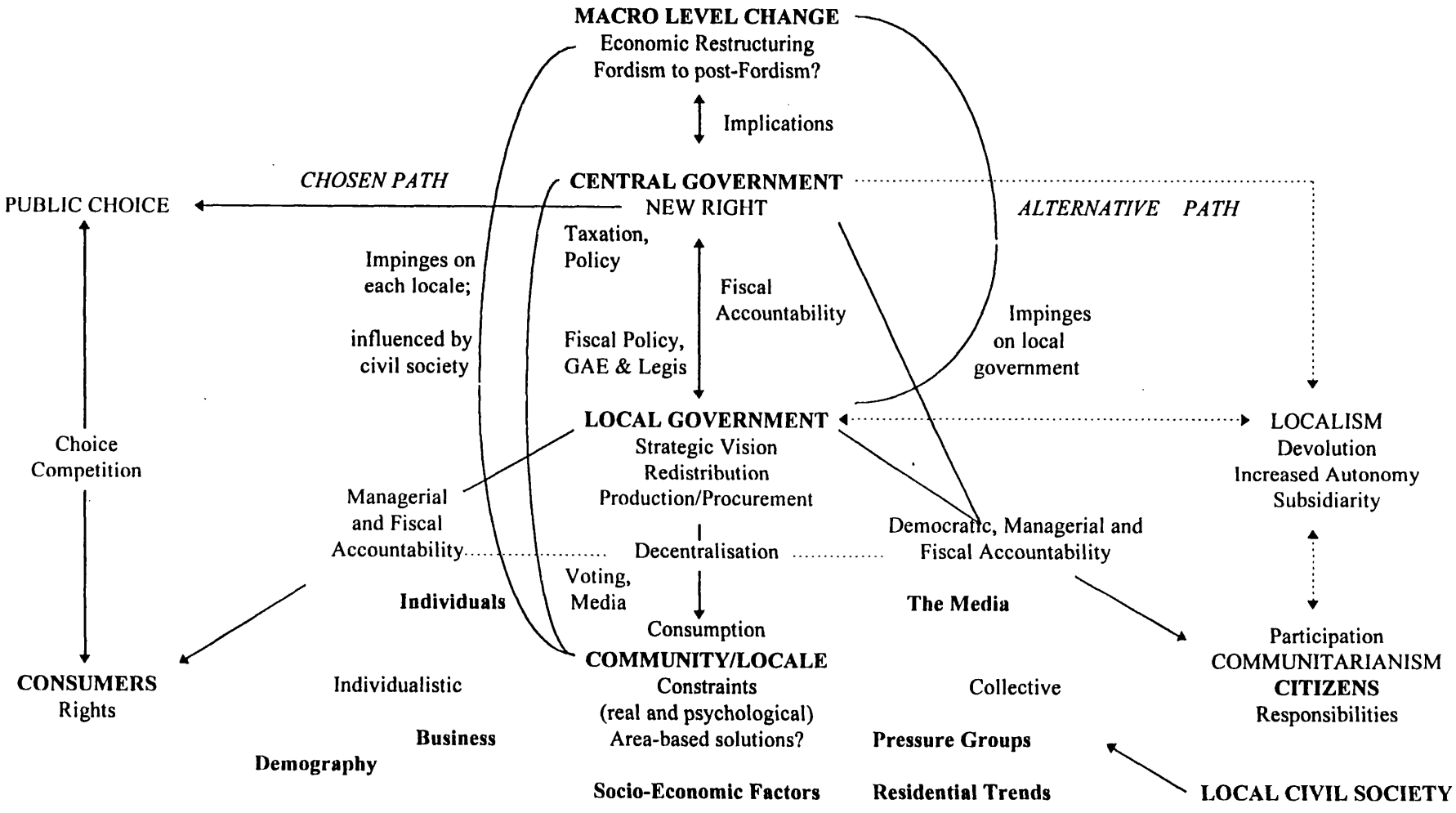
Figure 1.1 - Modelling the Socio-Political Phenomena



Martin *et al* (1996) describe the following inter-connected economic, social and political ideas as shaping the concept of a civil society:

- "it is defined by institutional conditions which create a network of non governmental intermediary institutions between the family and the state that facilitates social cohesion in society;
- the existence of civil society may be a necessary pre-requisite for a coherent social order by which state domination may be controlled and called to account by an active citizenship and by which, in turn, the state may support the free association of citizens in a plurality of economic and social spheres;
- the intermediary institutions of the civil society can be regarded not only as an essential prerequisite for an active democracy but also as an inclusive network in which all citizens may voluntarily associate ... it is a way of articulating private interests in the public sphere" (p.212).

To a large degree, civil society relies on local government as a source of power and protection. Martin *et al* (1996) point out that "(local) public institutions are needed to strengthen civil society against the incursions of and increasingly powerful state and to mediate the emergent differences of cultural tradition" (p.212). To some extent, local government can channel or stifle power as it sees fit. For example, it can effectively champion expressed local causes in the national or international political arenas. Alternatively it can limit local input into devolved services by opting for managerial decentralisation of control. Only where the latter is matched with increased public involvement could any measure of "empowerment" of civil society be said to have occurred. As will be demonstrated in the body of the study, there should be no presumption that such developments go hand in hand.

At the local level, civil society exerts pressure on local government (through a range of channels) for improved communications and services, reduced levels of local taxation and bureaucracy and greater involvement in decision-making (Walsh, 1989). The less tangible relationships relate to the existence of local civil society as expressed in concepts such as community, citizenship and locale and the role of the local state as a protector, maintainer and developer/"empowerer" of these (Gyford, 1991; Stewart, 1995). Such links are especially strained as a result of:

- the loss of local government autonomy and fiscal discretion;
- the increasingly direct nature of central government/local civil society relations (partially resulting from changes in local government responsibilities);
- underinvestment in the social and physical fabric which supports society; and
- the growing emphasis on the individual's rights as a consumer over their duties as a citizen (Walsh, 1989; Hambleton and Hoggett, 1990).

Martin *et al* (1996) also suggest that "the idea of a civil society has gained in prominence, historically at times of political change and uncertainties" (p.212). Economic restructuring, the implementation of the New Right agenda and the purported transition from Fordist to post-Fordist patterns of production/consumption suggests that the last 20 years may be such a time (Stoker, 1991).

Space and Locale

A distinct spatial manifestation of civil society on the ground may be difficult to identify. Indeed, the intangible nature of concepts such as civil society, community and locale have been a focus of debate for geographers and political scientists for some time (Gyford, 1991). The physical expression of particular phenomena is blurred by the

range of complex variables interacting to influence and explain local social, economic or political behaviour. Nonetheless, the concepts provide a useful basis for beginning to analyse complex inter-relationships between groups of individuals within and between distinct geographical areas.

Varying patterns of access to opportunities (conditioned by historic, socio-economic and psychological factors) may produce a range of relatively distinct locales typified by a degree of homogeneity in life chances, affluence/deprivation, built environment and opportunities for social mobility (Gyford, 1991; Stoker, 1991). According to Hamnett (1996), traditional tenure patterns in the UK (e.g. the concentration of many households at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy in public housing estates) exacerbates the spatial manifestation of the phenomena. Each locale cannot be considered in isolation. Rather, locales exist both in their own right and as part of a broader system of capitalist accumulation operating at a local, national and international level (Gyford, 1991). The nature of each locale is thus as likely to be determined by its responses to external pressures as it is to its own internal focus. The resultant characteristics do not express themselves consistently in the life chances and opportunities of all individuals within the locale, producing a complex map of inter and intra-locale variations across the city. Analysis of these variations and the extent to which they are reduced, maintained or exacerbated by central and local government policy forms a core of element of this study.

Stoker and Mossberger (1995) sum up the tri-partite relationship between each tier of government and specific locales within the context of broader change: "it is clear that post-Fordist changes have transformed some localities while leaving barely an imprint on others. In the economic sphere, the uneven development of capitalism has created a varied landscape, and despite a general trend towards post-Fordism, different

forms of production co-exist. Social institutions, including the local state, reflect the process of uneven development as well. Further social change is an active process rather than a passive one, and individuals and institutions mediate the process of transformation" (p.220). Hamnett (1996) concurs, pointing to the importance of both economic restructuring and the activity of the state as factors influencing the social geography of western cities.

The ability of individuals to "mediate the process of transformation" (referred to by Stoker and Mossberger, 1995) is not consistent within or between each locale. In short, any empowerment of civil society manifests itself unevenly across all locales (or indeed within any one). It depends both on the aspirations and conditioned abilities of individuals to participate directly (or organise into groups pressing for change) in the extent to which elected government represents their interests and in the nature and quality of the public services they receive. In response, key players in the local and national government arenas act as both facilitators of and gatekeepers to change, pointing to the need for strong lines of accountability between these players and the individuals and communities they are intended to serve (Dearlove, 1973; Walsh, 1989; Stoker, 1991).

Finally, the dominant New Right ideology of central government has affected the redistributive role and strategic capacity of local government to respond to spatially-manifested disparities through a range of fiscal, economic and structural policies (Midwinter, 1984; Stoker, 1989; Stewart, 1992). As is demonstrated later, this ideology has fragmented traditional locales/patterns of community through the promotion of consumerism, the increase in choice and the growth of the associated opportunities for social mobility (Hutchinson, 1993; Ranson, 1995; Walsh, 1995). The extent to which this has led, or was intended to lead, to increased plurality and equity is

Fordism to post-Fordism

The "Regulationist" School of Political Economy argues that from the early Twentieth Century, Fordism (exemplified by centralisation and mass production) replaced the traditional competitive regulation in capitalist societies. Fordism relates not only to manufacturing, but "to the whole social organisation of a regime covering an inter-related set of production processes, wage regulations, consumption patterns, corporate management and structures, and state activities" (Stoker, 1989, p.142). Regulation Theory therefore encourages a recognition of an inter-connected pattern of economic, social and political change (Stoker and Mossberger, 1995).

According to Stoker (1989), the "production process" lies at the core of capitalist economic activity. It concerns the organisation of labour and technology to produce goods and services. In the manufacturing sector of Fordist economies this is related to mass production, Taylorist assembly lines, part standardisation, automation, and bulk orders. Work became routine, and unskilled or semi-skilled employees were the norm for the factory floor (emphasising a growing division of labour between employers and employees). Standardised products and long production runs were used in an attempt to earn back the high capital cost of operation. As goods and consumption patterns standardised, there was a real standard of living increase for many people. Consumerist purchasing power resulting from more secure employment and growing materialism meant that salaries were seen by employers as an investment in production, with the entire capitalist system considered self-maintaining despite the inherent contradiction of increasingly polarised labour relations (Painter, 1991).

Mass consumption was an essential tenet of ongoing mass production, largely facilitated by concentrated advertising and credit availability. Such mass consumption

was necessary for Fordist economies to be successful. As Murray (1988) points out, "mass producers were particularly vulnerable to sudden falls in demand. Instalment credit, Keynesian demand and monetary management were all effective in stabilising markets for mass producers in post-war years" (p.9).

Public sector service provision and welfare were essential, partially addressing working class demands for better social conditions, and the desire of capitalist society to support and re-produce the workforce key to its maintenance. A strong welfare state based on Keynesian economic principles was seen as providing social stability and thus continued mass consumption (Stoker, 1989).

The Need for Change

Labour problems, over-production, and the inappropriateness of Fordist mass production in certain sectors (particularly the service sector), resulted in the destabilising of Fordism (Stoker, 1989; Painter, 1991; Isaac-Henry, 1997). Productivity gains fell, with reduced consumption and increased state expenditure (to counter resulting unemployment) placing a high burden on the state. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a general poor showing in the economy (leading to the questioning of the techniques of mass production and consumption) and the Oil Crisis led to the rapid process of de-industrialisation and resulting mass unemployment.

Evolving consumer sophistication (fuelled by increased awareness and expectation through mass advertising and associated consumption) was a further factor driving change. Improved standards of living and an upturn in disposable income produced demands for a broader range of better quality products reflecting the increasingly consumerist culture of traditionally Fordist economies (Walsh, 1989).

Technology also played a role, allowing new forms of production and control over decentralised production units and increasing opportunities to advertise and promote goods (Urry, 1988). Flexible production and segmented marketing became increasingly dominant (Stoker, 1989).

According to Painter (1991), local labour markets became much more fluid in the post-Fordist arena, demanding increased workforce mobility and undermining traditional patterns of community cohesion. Decentralisation, franchising, and sub-contracting did much to alienate the traditional core labour force characteristic of Fordism; with Thatcher Government industrial relations policy in the early 1980s doing much to undermine collective bargaining and the power of the unions. Part-time and temporary work now comprise a significant element of total employment, often without the remuneration and protection of terms and conditions of employment required to generate consumer confidence (Stoker, 1989).

Hamnett (1996) points to a growth in "professionalisation" associated with economic restructuring. In short, the decline of manufacturing and the growth of a flexible, post-Fordist and largely service-based economy has reduced the number of skilled manual middle income occupations as a proportion of total employment. Rather than producing increased social polarisation, there has been a growth at the top and middle of the occupational hierarchy at the expense of a "residual" group at (or off) the bottom (characterised by low income households, those relying on welfare and the unemployed). The links with traditional tenure patterns referred to earlier means that such change manifests itself tangibly on locales within the city, The importance of these socio-spatial trends will become apparent later in the study.

The transition has not been as smooth as it may first appear, with a complex range of political decisions, economic swings, cultural changes and population shifts

continuing throughout the period (Isaac-Henry, 1997). These have had real and psychological effects on civil society at national and local levels, impinging on public confidence in both government and the market, as well as altering quality of life expectations for a more mobile and less secure work force. Such increased mobility (in labour and access to goods) has led to a more tangible fragmentation of the homogeneity of many local communities on top of the more ambiguous effects of decreased employment opportunities, growing individualism in response to the consumerist agenda and a decline in public investment (Gyford, 1991). The relationship between civil society and government has changed inexorably as a result.

In the UK, the transition to post-Fordism may be seen as incomplete; such writers as Cloke and Goodwin (1992) question the use of the term at all. Indeed, Jessop (1992a) claims that the transition in the UK, especially in the public sector (to which attention is turned in Chapter 2), has been from a form of "flawed Fordism" to "flawed post-Fordism", suggesting that the Fordist critique was less applicable to this country than many authors suggest. Yet, Stoker and Mossberger (1995) indicate that "the Fordist/post-Fordist paradigm can be defended as a simplified depiction which nevertheless captures significant elements in the history of modern capitalist societies" (p.213). Moreover, Hall (1988) suggests that "earlier transitions (feudalism to capitalism, household production to modern industry) all turned out, on inspection, to be more protracted and incomplete than the theory suggested" (p.24).

Education as a Study Focus

It was considered fundamental that the study should focus on a topic which allowed close analysis of the tri-partite relationship between central government, local

government and civil society. Opportunities to examine shifting lines of accountability and changing power differentials were also essential. Finally, it was important that the detail allowed consideration of the changes in patterns of service production and consumption suggested in a transition from Fordism to post-Fordism. Taken together, this would allow conclusions to be reached on the extent to which change had been demand-led by service users/citizens and/or imposed as part of the dominant New Right agenda of central government. The implications of these changes for particular communities/locales and the related effects of the diminution of local government's redistributive role could then be discussed. Examination of public Education meets these criteria. A number of key research questions have been drawn up to address the socio-political and geographical phenomena examined in the study. These are outlined in Figures 1.2 and 1.3 respectively.

The effects of Education on the life chances and opportunities of individuals within communities make the service of fundamental importance to producers and consumers alike, with broader stakeholder interest in its outcomes (Bradford, 1989; Strain, 1995). This in itself might be expected to nurture desire by individuals and communities to participate in shaping both the direction of the service in the local area and its specific content and standards. Central and local Education management initiatives have focused on managerial and democratic enhancements in an attempt to increase options for service consumers and enhance patterns of active citizen participation (Bradford, 1989). Analysis of these developments allows conclusions to be drawn on the level of demand for change and the effectiveness of attempts to strengthen the managerial and democratic accountability central to the tri-partite relationship.

Education is also a significant issue on the national political stage, with civil society pressing for enhancements in inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes (Barns and Williams, 1997). This is reflected in the current Labour Government's commitment to "Education, Education, Education" in its 1997 Election Manifesto. In terms of ideological agendum, the New Right consider the quality of educational output to have significant implications for national competitiveness in the global market (Bradford, 1989). In addition, New Labour see it as an essential element of integrated area based solutions to unemployment/ underemployment, deprivation and reduced social mobility; an essential vehicle to empower individuals and positively discriminate in favour of less well-off communities. These issues are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

From a fiscal perspective, Education is the largest area of local government expenditure, raising an already high profile in the eyes of taxpayers, local authorities and the national purse. The apparently contradictory pressures for fiscal constraint and service enhancement have produced a series of innovative approaches at a national and local level to service management, allowing further consideration of the tri-partite relationship and its operation within the local arena (Sackney and Dibski, 1994). Indeed, the volume of legislation in the field in recent years focuses attention on the extent to which change may have been imposed by the centre, considering the broader context of strained central/local relations and the erosion of the redistributive/strategic roles of local government. In light of the extent of the Education spend, significant tampering in the field of Education alone has significant effects for the future of local government.

Figure 1.2 - Summary of Key Research Questions

Socio-Political and Education Management Aspects

- What are the main factors driving change in public service production and consumption? Which appear to be the primary factors?
- Has post-Fordist production and consumption actually occurred? Is there sufficient choice to generate market pressures?
- What are the key factors determining consumption? How has it manifested itself locally?
- Is there an apparent relationship between social mobility and participation?
- Do individual consumers expressing choice typically become involved in other forms of active participation?
- Has democratic *and* managerial accountability been enhanced? Is the customer *and* citizen agenda being addressed?
- Where and how have the main shifts in power taken place?
- Who are the key players in the local arena? How do they facilitate/gatekeep change?
- Does the relationship between local education authorities, schools and communities mirror the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society?
- Is the redistributive role of local government being undermined by decentralisation of control in Education?
- What do the findings imply about the applicability of the theories of local government discussed in Chapter 2?

Figure 1.3 - Key Research Questions: Locale and Geography of the City

- What are the implications of the socio-political and Education management case study findings for each locale and the overall socio-political geography of the city?
- Do inter-locale disparities in these phenomena exist? Can these be traced to the nature of particular locales? (e.g. is locale a factor in influencing patterns of service consumption?)
- Has consumerism undermined community focus and locale homogeneity? And, if so, to what degree?
- What do the findings imply about the appropriateness of area-based solutions as a means of fulfilling a redistributive role of local government?
- How are intra-urban local spaces best administered and governed? How does this support each theory of local government?
- Have changes in the tri-partite relationship during the 1980s and early 1990s altered the socio-political geography of the city?

The extent and nature of change in patterns of Education production and consumption have also been influenced by local geography and demography (MacFadyen and McMillan, 1984). Spatial mobility and territoriality have real and psychological implications for choice, as has the rationalisation of schools in response to demographic and residential shifts (Ranson, 1995; Barns and Williams, 1997). A complex and apparently contradictory picture has resulted, requiring further examination. On the one hand, closure and parental choice would appear to have added to community fragmentation as the focus around the local school has been removed or

diminished. Complex patterns of choice-associated mobility have cut across traditional community loyalties and blurred socio-economic distinctions between different areas. On the other hand, geographic, financial and psychological restrictions on choice appear to have entrenched traditional spatially manifested socio-economic cleavages, whilst the creation of a hierarchy of schools has widened gaps between those most and least able to make choices (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Strain, 1995; Ranson, 1995; Barns and Williams, 1997; and Willms, 1997).

In order to address these phenomena, the selected case study focuses on the implications of changes in Education management in the Glasgow Division of the former Strathclyde Regional Council, with findings subsequently abstracted and applied to the broader context of public service production and consumption. Findings are based on analysis of discussions with key Scottish Office and Regional Council officials, head teachers and school board members and examination of responses to a survey of parent attitudes in a number of specific study schools across the city. These are considered following examination of relevant literature and a range of secondary data outlining the situation in and between Glasgow schools. Details of the methodology are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 goes on to outline the manifestation of Fordism/post-Fordist in local government in the UK, considering the extent to which changing patterns of production have been directly and indirectly generated by the New Right agenda of consecutive Conservative Governments since 1979 and/or broader demand from civil society. Based on a review of literature, the chapter defines "consumerism" and "citizenship"

and discusses shifts in power and the associated impact on autonomy and accountability. Finally, it highlights changes in the tri-partite relationship over the last two decades and summarises the academic theory on the role of local government *vis-à-vis* central government and civil society.

Chapter 3 examines the implications of the New Right agenda and changes in patterns of consumption and production for the management of public Education. This includes a brief consideration of the conflicting views as to the role of Education and the functioning of schools in addressing broader socio-economic issues. Recognising some basic differences between the Scottish system and that in England and Wales, the chapter summarises legislative developments and resultant producer and consumer responses. It also considers the range of additional issues raised in Chapter 2 as they impinge on public Education.

Chapter 4 outlines the particular nature of the response by the former Strathclyde Regional Council (as the focus of the case study) to the aforementioned pressures for change, summarising the details of specific developments in Education management and the evolving relationship between the school and consumer/citizen within the authority area.

Chapter 5 covers the methodology adopted, outlining specific techniques and justifying the selection of the general study area and the particular locales/schools chosen for detailed analysis (on the basis of a range of secondary data). It briefly summarises the different definitions of locale, explaining how the term has been adopted in this particular study as the basis for analysis of spatially manifested trends within and between different areas.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 describe the results of the detailed fieldwork undertaken in the selected study school areas, covering and building upon the views of head teachers,

school board members and parents respectively. Chapter 9 links the points raised, relating findings back to the issues identified in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 and highlighted in the research questions laid out in Figure 1.2.

Chapter 10 considers the implications of the study findings for the observations on the nature of communities/locales, examining the extent to which post-Fordism and New Right ideology have expressed themselves on each and their relation to others. It goes on to examine the implications of these inter and intra-locale variations for the overall socio-political geography of the city, drawing conclusions as to the future role of local government in the face of change. The conclusions relate to the geographical research questions outlined in Figure 1.3.

Finally, based on the findings, Chapter 11 reviews the evolving tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society drawing conclusions on the extent to which change has been demand-led and/or imposed as part of a broader over-riding political agenda. It examines changes in the power differential between each "party", examining how this links with changes in lines and patterns of accountability. It also considers whether the resultant erosion of the redistributive role and strategic capacity of local government is likely to be reflected in the maintenance or exacerbation of spatially expressed patterns of access to life chances or whether innovative approaches to service provision and governance can challenge these trends in the future. As a result, it considers the continued applicability of the various theories of local government and summarises the implications for particular locales and the overall socio-political geography of the city.

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Chapter 2 - Changes in the Tri-Partite Relationship Between Central Government, Local Government and Civil Society

This chapter outlines the manifestation of Fordism/post-Fordist in local government in the UK, considering the extent to which changing patterns of production have been directly and indirectly generated by the New Right agenda of consecutive Conservative Governments since 1979 and/or broader demand from civil society. Initial reference to these concepts was made in the opening chapter. Chapter 2 discusses their manifestation in more detail, indicating their implications for the autonomy and accountability of local government and the extent and nature of civil society influence.

Based on a review of the literature and up to date thinking on governance issues and democratic renewal, the chapter goes on to investigate the arguably competing nature of "consumerism" and "citizenship" and the extent to which they have influenced the responses of local government and civil society to broader changes in the macro-level economic structure and patterns of central government intervention.

Finally, the chapter explores the various theories regarding the role and operation of local government within the tri-partite relationship, discussing the ongoing relevance of each theory in light of experience and the evolving roles of each "party". This paves the way for a more service specific investigation of how these phenomena relate to changes in Education management and whether or not the theories of local government retain their applicability in the context of the planning, delivery and consumption of a major service.

Local Government under Fordism

The applicability of the Fordist/post-Fordist critique in relation to the public service is arguably more ambiguous than it is to manufacturing. Nonetheless, Stoker and Mossberger (1995) consider that "Regulation Theory has proved itself useful in clarifying changes in the form of local governance and the changing place of local governance in the overall national and international political system ... The regulationist approach views the role of the state and local government as the product of social struggle in an unstable society. However, the tensions and conflicts of developing capitalism are such that the emergence of a relatively stable system of institutions and social relations (a mode of social regulation) to manage and sustain the conditions for sustained economic growth is problematic. Any mode of social regulation is prone to breakdown and collapse. The changing pattern of local governance can be examined in the context of this complex historical process" (p.211-212). Indeed, it is clear that local government has played a key role in sustaining and determining specific historical regimes of accumulation. The extent of local authority expenditure influences this, accounting for a large proportion of public expenditure and gross domestic product.

Fordist local government was characterised by standardisation of service specification and delivery, inflexible mass production and an emphasis on production rather than consumer demand. In addition, Fordist local authorities were largely responsible for the state process of providing welfare and other public services, and critical agents in the planning and regulation of the local arena. Local government remains a major employer in many areas, and have control over large (though ever-

decreasing) housing stocks and considerable areas of land. Up until the 1980s, their position as the main local bureaucracy remained intact (Stoker, 1989; Walsh, 1989).

Local authorities' management arrangements followed in the footsteps of the private sector companies during the Fordist period, with economies of scale, centralised corporate planning, and the production of standardised services being characteristic. By the mid-1970s local government was characteristically large and overly bureaucratic (Walsh, 1989; Isaac-Henry, 1997). The divide between local government and the electorate widened as local authorities became dominated by rules and procedures intended to produce uniformity and predictability in their dealings with the public. In the local arena, power was thus retained predominantly in the hands of the local authority. Professionals dominated positions of influence, often making paternalistic judgements as to how local government should operate and services should be provided. Moreover, increased funding was seen as being the best way of developing inefficient services, rather than the adoption of research and public participation to determine human problems and solutions.

As with the broader critique of the applicability of the Regulationist argument, a number of authors including Painter (1991), Cochrane (1991) and Jessop (1992b) question the relevance of Fordism/post-Fordism in the local government arena, suggesting that public service production, with the exception of social Housing[1], is not amenable to mass production techniques. However, local government has undoubtedly been party to the state welfarism component of Fordism, playing a key role in the production of:

- **social investment** - projects and services that increase the productivity of labour;

[1] characterised by uniformity, often large scale projects and systems building techniques

- **social consumption** - projects and services which lower the reproduction costs of labour power; and
- **social expenses** - projects and services which are required to maintain social order (Whitfield, 1992).

Stoker and Mossberger (1995) point to some of the reasons for ambiguity: "when looking at the process of change towards the Post-Fordist local state the environment of centrally driven initiatives creates the conditions for disinformation. The rhetoric of change may be exaggerated to appease the centre and the substance of change may be less firmly established. The centre may over-promote a few exemplary cases in order to provide a lesson for others and justify its claims of success. In short the extent and nature of change should always be questioned" (p.220).

However, the relative transition from more traditional patterns of service production and consumption is becoming increasingly apparent with the development of the enabling role for councils and the increasing emphasis on partnership in policy planning and service delivery. Power is slowly being disseminated through pressures to decentralise services, devolve decision-making and enhance participative democracy. Accountability is being strengthened as a result. The extent to which these changes have been demand-led in response to broader societal pressures operating on both macro and local scales or more directly imposed as part of a political agenda again remains ambiguous.

A Post-Fordist Approach in Local Government

Despite Painter (1991) and Cochrane's (1991) scepticism, it could be argued that up until the early 1980's much of local authority activity was still along Fordist lines. Since then, local authorities have responded by incrementally taking steps away from Fordism. The key question seems to be "in response to what?" Economic restructuring, central government intervention and civil society pressure all appear to have been significant. Some factors are internal to the local political environment; some are external. Beyond economic restructuring, Walsh (1989) suggests that "a combination of financial constraint and growing public and central government dissatisfaction with local authority services led to a search for new forms of organisation and new approaches to the delivery of services" (p.4). The importance of the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society starts to become clearer.

Stoker (1989) points to an apparently contradictory position where "local government can be seen as both conditioned by the social and economic context in which it operates and as a set of institutions with the potential to direct and intervene in that context" (p.148). He suggests that local government's desire for stability within this context has strengthened its opposition to the externally imposed change of the 1980s and 1990s. The nature and pace of the response have thus not been smooth or uniform. Regardless, the importance of macro level social and economic factors has become increasingly relevant in explaining changes in the tri-partite relationship.

The Central Government Agenda

According to Stoker (1991), the contemporary history of local government has to be considered in a broader national, or even international, context. As inflation and unemployment figures increased following the oil crisis of the early to mid-1970s, cuts in public expenditure were seen as relieving the strain on public resources. In 1976 the Labour Government borrowed from the International Monetary Fund on the condition that the growth in public expenditure ceased. Labour's programme of cuts was achieved by a combination of discussion, compromise, and conflict within the established machinery of government.

The election of a Conservative Government in 1979 and subsequent New Right Thatcherite policies resulted in deeper divisions between central and local government (Stoker, 1991; Midwinter, 1984; Monies, 1985). The Thatcher Administration appears to have been particularly prone to pursuing policies in a "top-down" manner, failing to recognise the need for negotiation, co-operation, and compromise to effect central policies in the local arena. According to Stoker (1991), the local policy environment is not easily manipulated by the centre, unless some form of reward is perceived by the local system (eg. greater autonomy, financial gain by each local authority, or an improved working environment). This perception of gain tends to be affected by the economic and social conditions of each locality, and its impact depends on the political power of the individual or group concerned. In reality therefore, the apparently limited gains led to increased central/local tensions as control and power were in many cases either centralised or devolved to a sub local authority level.

The ongoing concentration of power in the hands of local government was seen by New Right central government as self-perpetuating and posing a threat to

accountable public expenditure. The New Right agenda emphasised the importance of using competition between producers to fragment local government paternalism, drive down costs and improve quality and value for money for service consumers. On the production side, this involved increasing reliance on deregulated market forces as a means of driving continuous improvement and a programme of supply-side diversification aimed at improving the range and quality of choice open to service consumers. Steps were also taken to increase the accountability of service providers to consumers and the electorate. There was a further fiscal agenda of driving down public sector borrowing by reducing overall levels of public expenditure (through grant reductions and rate capping) and increasing private involvement in public services. As Isaac-Henry (1997) points out, it was a period in which "the government put the private sector on a pedestal as a model to which the public sector should aspire, even if that meant forcing and bullying them into so doing" (p.2).

Interestingly, Isaac-Henry (1997) and Walsh (1995) suggest that "the Thatcher premiership brought with it no coherent philosophy on managerialism" (p.8). Wilson (1993) indicates the strong role of theoreticians following the 1979 Election, referring to "an intellectual attack mainly rooted in the work of Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman and espoused in the UK primarily by Sir Keith Joseph. The result was an intellectual rationalisation and legitimisation of Thatcher's convictions. The essence of the new right philosophy was the rejection of Keynesian collectivism and government interventionism" (p.27).

The Conservative Government's policy at a national level of supply-side diversification and increased privatisation was mirrored in the local government arena through a range of initiatives aimed at increasing choice and driving improvement through competition. These included tenure diversification (through Right to Buy and

voluntary transfers), grant maintained status for schools and the development of a mixed economy of care in Social Services; all aimed to increase choice by offering alternatives to direct local authority provision. Furthermore, Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT), the development of internal markets and the introduction of parental choice legislation aimed to impose market disciplines within local authority services, intended both to enhance value for money through increased productivity and make the decision-making process more transparent and accountable.

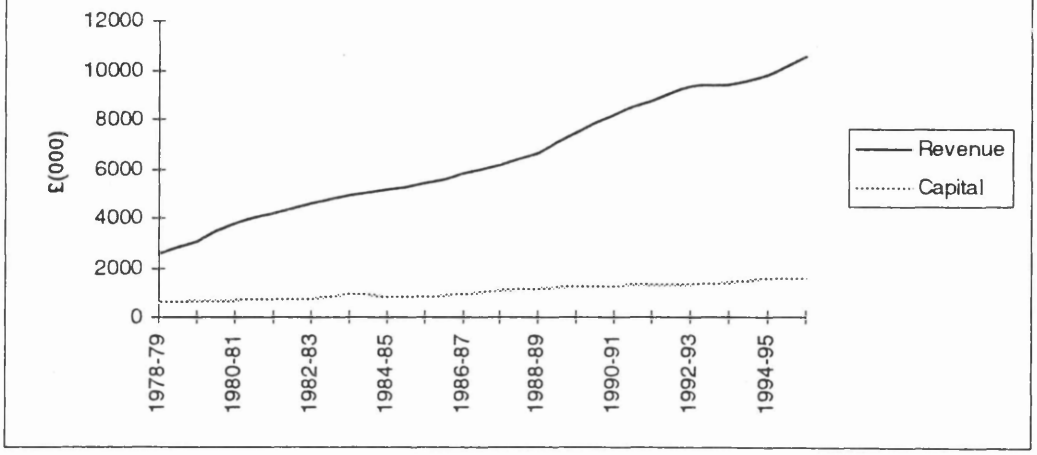
It appears therefore that local authorities' move towards post-Fordism was a pragmatic response to minimising the implications of the Conservative government's imposed political/economic agenda and related fiscal regime, as well as a reaction to meeting the evolving demands of civil society at a local and national level (as taxpayers and service stakeholders). Whilst the framework for addressing central government policy has been relatively consistently applied to authorities, at the local level the nature and scale of responses have varied, reflecting both the ability of officers and members to address change and their attitude to delivering the new agenda. This attitudinal response reflects perceptions of both the political/ideological challenge from central government and the perceived loss of political and professional control. The varying inter-authority "attitude, ability and action" are considered later in the chapter, with the theme being developed throughout the study.

From a fiscal perspective, the main means by which central government controlled local authority expenditure was to reduce the contribution of central grants and capital allocations, leaving an increased proportion of local government finance to be made up from Rates/Community Charge/Council Tax and miscellaneous sources. Subsequent capping of revenue expenditure and the implications of the "gearing effect" on levels of local taxation seriously challenged the ability of local authorities to counter

the reduction in central government allocations. In addition, an increased proportion of local capital spending was financed by asset sales. According to Gyford and James (1983), central government objectives were to disenfranchise local government and empower service consumers and local taxpayers. This would see local authorities possessing fewer functions and responsibilities, meaning that they would require, raise and receive less finance. Indeed, Midwinter (1984) points out that the central vision of the appropriate role for local government is one where the centre determines the level of resources and the pattern of expenditure in the locality. This of course has implications for local autonomy, accountability and democracy. As a result, Midwinter (1984) suggests that the centre's role has changed from one of influence to one of control. He questions the capacity of the centre to construct expenditure guidelines on the basis of estimates of need assessed by the centre. Moreover, "if local governments are miniature political systems responding to needs and pressures in the local environment, there is no logical reason to believe their decisions should sum to total determined in the Treasury" (p.88).

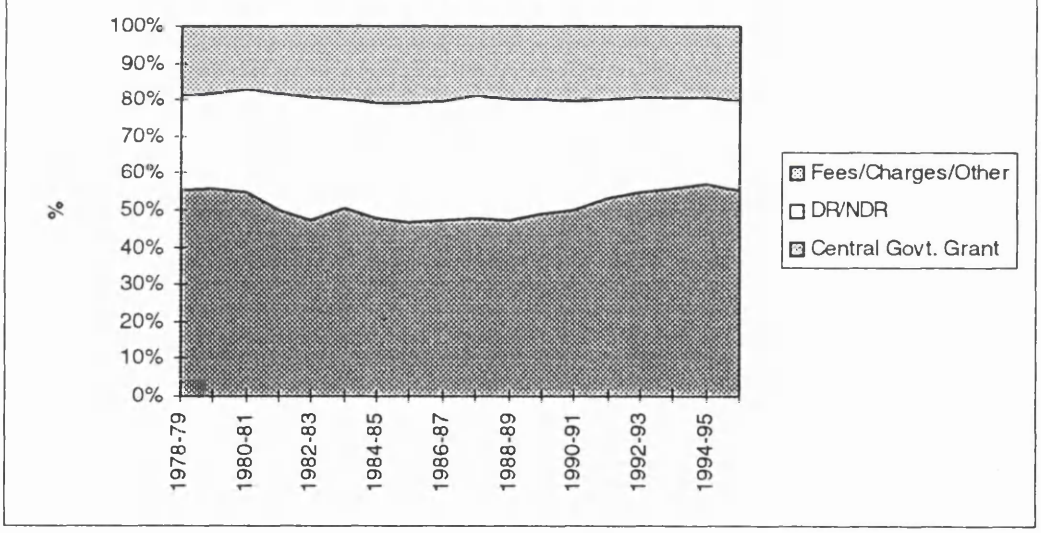
Details of revenue and capital expenditure trends are outlined in Figures 2.1 and 2.2. Since 1981, central government has implemented several expenditure restraints (Bailey, 1988). The percentage of total relevant expenditure funded by central government grants has been reduced annually, thus increasing the contribution to be raised through local taxation/direct charges. Defensive strategies (such as increasing the Community Charge to maintain services) were intended to be electorally dangerous for local government as part of the Conservative agenda of increasing accountability to taxpayers (Stoker, 1989). Moreover, local authority accounts were increasingly scrutinised and revenue budget capping was introduced.

Figure 2.1 - Local Government Expenditure in Scotland 1978/79 - 95/96



Source: Abstracted from the Scottish Office annual "Scottish Local Government Financial Statistics"[2]

Figure 2.2 - Local Government in Scotland - Sources of Revenue Income 1978/79 - 95/96



Source: Abstracted from the Scottish Office annual "Scottish Local Government Financial Statistics"[3]

[2] revenue expenditure figures based on the toal expenditure each year on General Fund Services, Housing, Trading Services and Special Funds (including Superannuation and Common Goods Funds)

[3] "Central Government Grant" includes Rates or Revenue Support Grant and Other Government Grants; "DR/NDR" includes Domestic Rates, Community Charge or Council Tax and Non-Domestice Rates; "Other Expenditure" includes Capital Support Service costs and Revenue Contributions to Capital.

Control by the centre over grant and rate income has meant that individual authorities are left with almost no discretion over the total of their expenditure (Bailey, 1988). Increased "ring-fencing" has further reduced discretion. As 86% of total local government income now comes via central government, local autonomy appears considerably undermined. Despite these measures, the Conservative Governments achieved little of their goal of reducing local expenditure (Stoker, 1991). They have, however, had some success in controlling expenditure in the face of loacl government demands for growth and increased investment.

The Conservative Governments since 1979 have therefore largely influenced (if not facilitated) the breakdown of previous levels of public service provision. The reliance of individuals on the state has been attacked, with the promotion of a dubiously successful individualistic enterprise culture replacing the safety net of union and local government representation (Stoker, 1991). This has obvious implications for the state/civil society relationship, with an emphasis on independence of the individual and institutions undermining the governance role of the state indirectly, whilst central government policy did much to directly undermine the role of local authorities (for political and fiscal ends) within the tri-partite relationship. Combined with an often overt and publicly expressed Conservative government scepticism towards public sector priorities and ability, such an ideologically driven individualist agenda has done little to satisfy civil society's expectations of local government at the very time when innovation has been demanded (and on occasion delivered).

Jessop (1992b) supports the view that rather than being directly demand-led, a Post-Fordist regime was imposed by the Thatcher Government, typified by "supply-side intervention to promote innovation and structural competitiveness, and going beyond the mere entrenchment of social welfare to restructure and subordinate it to market

forces" (p.6). However, he suggests that, "local authorities have found it difficult to pursue effective .... strategies in the face of central government retrenchment and the imposition of unrealistic neo-liberal strategies" (p.9). Walsh (1995) concurs with this idea of imposition, suggesting that public opinion has not been a strong influence on the development of market based approaches to public service management. To this end, it would appear that the process of change has been driven more directly by New Right ideology than consumerist or broader civil society pressure.

The ever-increasing salience of the "enabling authority" emphasises the strategic role of local government in service specification, procurement and monitoring (rather than traditional patterns of direct provision). Furthermore, some services have been totally removed from local control, or shared with other public and private organisations. This change in focus is seen by many practitioners as posing a threat to the strategic capacity and redistributory role of local government (in response to intra-authority disparities). However, such a threat would appear to arise as much from the failure of many authorities to adopt a strategic approach to governance and integrated service planning in the current fiscal climate (often due to skills and resource deficits) than be an inherent feature of the enabling role. Indeed, the increased emphasis on strategic management inherent to the Labour Government's Best Value and community planning proposals may re-establish the strategic and redustributive roles of local authorities, within an enabling context. Ongoing constraints on local government finance suggest that such roles will increasingly require to be progressed in partnership with other agencies and sectors.

As has been argued, democratic and managerial decentralisation of decision-making and service delivery and devolution of powers and responsibilities to the sub local state level has been accompanied by the increasing centralisation of "command"

over certain services (eg. the national curriculum and Local Management of Schools in the English/Welsh education system). The strategic planning and regulatory role of local authorities is being challenged by Urban Development Corporations and Local Enterprise Companies - arms-length Government agencies by-passing elected local authorities. Regardless of doubts about the strength of its democratic mandate, the power balance within the tri-partite relationship has thus moved increasingly away from local government. However, the extent to which civil society has been empowered as a result appears to have been very limited. Local government has gone some way towards decentralising services and decision-making, but there remains much room for improvement. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that many arms-length Government agencies are any better at responding to pluralistic demands than local authorities. Indeed, LECs and TECs in particular have had a reputation for imposing paternalistic solutions on local communities with minimal consultation.

Stoker (1991) suggests that a hierarchy of services has been produced as a direct result of the operation of the free market. This ranges from private provision at the top[4], through government funded or better local authority services (typically in more affluent areas) to poorer local authority services in more deprived areas. Despite doubts about Stoker's assertions of variations in the quality of service production, choice between services is undoubtedly constrained by a range of historic, socio-economic, geographic and psychological factors distorting what could be seen as an already uneven playing field of service experiences from which to choose. In a service such as Education, the market exacerbates inequalities in access to provision by attracting more able consumers to "better quality" Educational experiences. Rather than driving up standards across the board, the market thus guarantees a spiral of

[4] in some service areas

decline for marginalised households. It is only the redistributive capacity of local authorities (or local agencies working in partnership) which can attempt to redress disparities in service outcomes. The disenfranchising[5] of local government therefore poses a threat to many local communities, especially those least able to to exploit opportunities to influence outcomes or access services. Any empowerment of civil society resulting from decentralisation/devolution can thus be seen to be inconsistent in the absence of an element of more central regulation.

The resultant decline in strategic focus and resources further disadvantages the least affluent and articulate groups within society (Hoggett, 1992). Not only are such groups typically less able to access services at present, but they are less capable of articulating their demands in an individualist arena where choice is promoted and contracts and charters are dominant. Such groups often rely on democratic control to articulate their needs, and the distancing of service provision from that control through a contract culture may reduce any influence such groups might have. This is especially true if authorities have given insufficient attention to their needs when specifying and procuring services. As discussed in the body of the thesis, choice will only increase accountability where all groups understand the choices available to them and are in a position to access or afford alternatives.

Like Jessop (1992b), Stoker (1989) does not see this change in the responsiveness of local government as rising automatically from the process of social and economic change, but instead, as part of a Thatcherite response to these processes. "The aim is to create a local government compatible with the flexible economic structures, two tier welfare system and enterprise culture which in the Thatcher vision constitute the key to a successful future" (Stoker, 1989, p.159). This strengthens the

[5] whether as direct providers or strong voices in partnership arrangements

hypothesis that change is the result of both demand (generated by socio-economic change and moves away from Fordism) and an ideologically imposed solution from a central government with a particular agenda in respect of the public sector. Whilst these pressures have been far from mutually exclusive, the former has been of assistance in facilitating the latter.

Interestingly, as we move into the late 1990s, the same demand led pressures for change appear to be acting as a check to the power of central government and the individualistist agenda promoted during the last 19 years. Civil society appears to be expressing these concerns at the national and local levels, with particular dissatisfaction at the profligacy of government in the face of welfare reform and public service reductions. The drive on this occasion appears to have a moral rather than political focus, perhaps due to civil society's scepticism about the democratic process and the damage done to the credibility of government by accusations of "sleaze" and economic mismanagement in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Such developments are discussed later in the chapter on consideration of the concepts of "community governance" and "communitarianism".

The Evolving Demands of Civil Society

Civil society demands on government are expressed through a range of responses at the national and local levels. Moreover, as awareness and expectations evolve, the nature and level of demand changes to create a complex array of pressures. The challenge for government is to react to these competing and often contradictory demands whilst refining its own values and objectives and retaining its political and managerial integrity. At the local level, pressure comes not only from taxpayers, but

service consumers, the media, outside agencies and external political sources operating on a national and international platform and reacting to similar pressures for change.

Local government in the UK has neither a power of general competence nor any formal constitutional mandate. Rather, it is empowered by central government to fulfil a range of specified duties and responsibilities. Other specified powers are discretionary. As a result, power lies predominantly in the hands of central government. Nonetheless, local authorities have the ability (arguably responsibility) to respond more effectively to the demands of local civil society, increasing local influence in the setting of priorities and standards of service whilst retaining an element of autonomy and discretion. They can be held more accountable as a result. In addition, managerial devolution has been increasingly supplemented by the development of a range of formal and informal channels aimed at enhancing public participation in the decision-making process. An effective relationship between civil society and local government appears to be based on both increased local government accountability (democratic, managerial and fiscal) and a growth in opportunities for forms of public involvement in decision-making and service specification. Whilst the former may enhance public influence, only the latter will produce any real empowerment of civil society.

An interesting tri-partite relationship has built up between civil society (at a national and local level), central government and local government. Whilst civil society frustration at apparent local government paternalism, bureaucracy and general intransigence undoubtedly helped smooth the way for the Thatcherite agenda, local civil society opposition to specific central policy proposals has been used successfully by local government to defend itself from ideological and (not mutually exclusive) fiscal attacks. This is apparent both in the use of the media by authorities as an ally in

generating public support in the event of budgetary cuts (often by the suggestion of "sensationalist" proposals to address reductions in resource settlements) and the broad opposition to the Community Charge. Paradoxically, central government has often used local authorities to implement or oversee the introduction of economic or environmental initiatives considered to be politically sensitive. Stoker and Mossberger's (1995) comments on the ambiguity such approaches cause to an objective assessment of actual change in the local government environment were highlighted earlier in the chapter.

The complexity of the tri-partite relationship is perhaps best exemplified when considering the ambiguous issue of government finance and associated taxation. The public have been largely unable or unwilling to make the links between decreased income tax and increased direct taxation, Council Tax levels and charges at the point of use. The extent to which this ambiguity, complexity and/or apathy is used as a political football displays the (perhaps unsurprising) ignorance of many elements of civil society to the complexities of governance and its resourcing. It also raises questions about the perception and understanding of individuals as to their roles, entitlements and duties as increasingly informed tax payers, consumers and citizens within the national and local political environment.

Interest Groups and Public Participation

The growth in civil society awareness and expectation has resulted in a plethora of interests competing for power and attention in the political arena. Since the 1960's the growth of pressure groups and public participation in service provision has been a characteristic of the local political arena. Participation varies in its form and extent,

from the expression of a choice, through voting, to active lobbying and direct influence/involvement in the decision-making process. Moreover, it can be expressed individually or collectively, depending on the channels available and the particular issue.

Social and economic changes have produced a more assertive public nurtured by improved educational opportunities, the development of the mass media, and the growth of investigative journalism. Dissatisfaction with the natural, built, and social environment, and the increase in citizen organisation resulted in demands for a more participative role for the public (Gyford, 1991). Furthermore, changes in the social structure (such as the increase in single-parent families, and the tendency for both parents to work) have transferred many responsibilities from the individual to local authorities (such as care for the elderly or infirm), with public expectations and pressures on local government having increased as a result.

King (1995) summarises the importance of participation as being:

- the basis for self development;
- a necessary process for the exercise of individual choice by voters;
- a method of informing policy objectives and ensuring that certain principles and criteria are met;
- linked to ideas about community maintenance and respect for historical traditions. One of the reasons for local government is to allow those citizens who feel part of a particular community to govern themselves and to make decisions about those issues affecting them directly.
- a means of stressing 'localism' in local government. (Local government is best able to address the needs of local voters, who reside in a particular area and hold opinions about its governance - Jones and Stewart, 1983); and

- traditionally often pursued for socialist reasons, as participation and control of local government could provide the means for pursuing policies which aim to transform the local economy and its relationship to the community.

In addition to increases in individual participation, Stoker (1991) suggests four categories of interest groups, often using the weight of numbers and/or their concentration within specific boundaries to strengthen their local case:

- **producer** or **economic groups** such as businesses, trade unions, or professional associations;
- **community groups** drawing on a distinct social base for their support, whose main thrust of activity is aimed at influencing decision-making (eg. community councils, tenants associations);
- **"cause" groups** concerned with promoting a particular set of ideas rather than immediate material interests (eg. CND, Animal Rights groups, environmental pressure groups);
- **voluntary sector groups** established to meet a perceived need in the community, perhaps not adequately addressed by existing public services.

Such groups have a range of formal and informal options available to them to influence change, regardless of whether or not they are truly representative bodies. These range from lobbying, through public campaigns, to direct participation in decision-making bodies. As Gyford (1991) indicates, local government democratic and management innovation has tried to identify new structures, cultures and practices to deal with a more diverse and assertive public expressing themselves as consumers and citizens.

Stoker (1991) identifies two interpretations of the role of group politics. Firstly, he mentions a "pluralist theory" premised on the idea that interest groups help to articulate the specific needs of particular sections of society, thus enhancing local democracy. Secondly, he identifies an "elitist critique" of this theory, claiming that local authorities are enclosed organisations promoting sectionalism by only considering a select range of external interests in the decision-making process (with producer group interests, as "insiders", most likely to be heard). The pluralist ideas would therefore seem to be contradicted by the reality of group influence in local politics.

Walsh (1989) suggests that participation is necessary to improve access to services for certain groups, who may presently be restricted by the geographical location of a service node, language or cultural differences, lack of information, a psychological difficulty in accessing the service or an inability to call during office hours. Moreover, Walsh agrees with Stoker (1991) that the increased role of the national party manifesto in local politics undermines local representative democracy in the handling of specific local issues, making participation even more essential. The nature of the electoral system, the low voting turnout at local elections, and the importance of national issues in voting preference, further emphasise this need. Participation should thus be attractive to local authorities advocating democracy and accountability. As participation is also essential to any informed allocation of resources, it also becomes a value for money issue for local government as a whole.

Dearlove (1973) suggests that local authorities act as "gatekeepers"; actively restricting, obstructing and excluding certain groups from influencing the decision-making process. Some individuals and groups are more able to be manipulated into changing their position to be more in line with local authority political and managerial priorities. Newton (1976) suggests that groups with the best resources (income, staff,

prestige, and organisation - typically producer groups) are most able to promote their concerns. Groups unable to organise and/or articulate themselves are typically under-represented and more easily diverted. Empowerment is therefore not only inconsistent, but also selective. Disparities exist between and across sectional cleavages, and also within and between different locales.

Dunleavy (1980) argues that in addition to this, informal and social contacts between local authority actors and external interests are also important. Such informal networks again tend to involve producer interests, often ignoring the wider political environment. Further, the development of formal corporatist mechanisms (eg. local authority/producer group forums, joint committees, etc.) enhance the already privileged status of certain groups.

Regardless, as Stoker (1991) points out, since the mid-1970's many local authorities have responded by creating new opportunities for interaction with a wider range of groups and individuals whose willingness to be involved in service delivery is increasing.

Consumers or Citizens?

The growth in active participation by groups and individuals cannot be easily divorced from the enhanced expectations of the public as taxpayers and consumers of public services. As outlined earlier, these expectations have been heightened by increased producer flexibility in the private sector, growing awareness of rights and issues and improved communications. As both Walsh (1989) and Gyford (1991) point out, whilst consumerism can seen as favouring the individual rather than the collective

interests of local civil society; citizenship concerns itself more with the latter, presuming individuals have responsibilities as well as rights.

The distinction is important, as each perspective requires a different (but holistic) focus from local government. Consumerism demands more flexible customer oriented service delivery and strengthened managerial accountability; whereas citizenship involves more active participation by individuals as members of communities (looking beyond their individual or sectional interests) and a focus on responsibilities as well as rights. Responses involve enhancing democratic accountability through increased participation and a range of approaches aimed at nurturing community identity and cohesion and assisting in community development. Responses are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Hambleton and Hoggett (1990) point to the roots of the debate, suggesting that consumerism is grounded in economic theory and tends to individualise needs. Citizenship, on the other hand, considers the collective good ahead of individual benefit, with its foundations lying in political theory rather than market economics.

Right and Left have different ideas about the role of the citizen and the nature of citizenship. As Corrigan (1997) indicates "all modern politics revolves around the relationship between state and civil society. ... Intellectuals studying the experience (of involvement in local government) have not been short of innovations for bringing citizens into a more active relationship with governments. We have not been short of realistic techniques for involving citizens. What we have been short of is citizens" (p.6-8). This emphasises concerns about the desire of citizens to become empowered, irrespective of the adequacy of channels aimed at doing so.

Luntley (1989) recognises two models of citizenship, the individual and the social. In the former the individual is the source of the bonds tying people together,

whereas in the latter these bonds arise from the community which collectively acts to ensure that society is organised in an appropriate manner. The social model suggests that individuals are empowered by the economic and social arrangements in which they exist, embracing the strengthening of participative democracy and nurtuting a shared agenda. Luntley's (1989) idea of social citizenship ties in closely with the concept of "communitarianism" discussed later in the chapter.

According to Luntley (1989), the two models suggest philanthropy and polity respectively, the former being advocated by the Right, the latter by the Left. "In the individual philanthropically oriented model of citizenship the emphasis is primarily on developing a recognition of private citizenship obligations performed especially through voluntary service and charitable giving. The social politically oriented model however is one which argues that private obligations, though important, are not enough to constitute an adequate conception of a genuinely public citizenship. The latter must embrace political participation as well as good works" (Gyford, 1991, p.172). He suggests that the Right therefore traditionally favour a discretionary and discriminatory altruism, while the Left have embodied a concept of the common good rather than philanthropic or market-based decision-making. The proposals of the Labour Government for community planning and their continued support for elements of the market indicate a desire to develop both perspectives.

The Local Government Response

Many of the reforms relating to increased participation have come from central government (e.g. legislation on school boards and statutory Decentralisation Schemes in Scottish local government). However, many local authorities have also shown a

desire to increase the nature and extent of public participation in an attempt to empower local communities. As Walsh (1989) suggests, "the vision of better public services must be expressed in the systems, structure, process, and culture of the organisation....The notion of public service does not wholly reject a bureaucratic culture, but tries to retain its virtues of impartiality, equitable treatment of cases and clear records and procedures, while not sinking under its weight or succumbing to its timetable. It (the new approach) emphasises decentralised responsibility, autonomy, and accountability within a framework of coordination and control" (p.7).

At the local level, elements of such developments have been supported by the range of ideological perspectives during the subsequent years, although the justification (consumer or citizen focus) for this support has been different. While the Urban Left of the early 1980s spoke of "citizens and public debate", the Right emphasised "customers, market demand and increased accountability", challenging the very notion of public provision for public need (Hambleton *et al*, 1989). The Urban Left experimented with "neo-corporatist" approaches such as decentralised service delivery, increased citizen participation, and increasing recognition of minority groups; and the "New Right" Conservative Government forced authorities (other than the Tory "flagships" which chose to lead) to introduce or react to a range of market-focused mechanisms including contracting out, competition for capital resources, increased reliance on external funding, tenure diversification and the opting out of schools. More recently, New Labour has drawn on elements of both perspectives, emphasising the importance of multiple solutions to develop the community mandate required by local authorities if they are to retain a strong position in the local political arena.

Based on the observations of Painter (1991), Peck and Tickell (1992) and Stoker (1989, 1990), Stoker and Mossberger (1992, 1995) have outlined the

emergence of a Post-Fordist state under four inter-connected headings - economic, social, political and managerial (see Figure 2.3). Whilst individual local authority responses to these have varied in form and scale, the inter-relationship between the phenomena and a consistency in moves to address these in an integrated manner are becoming increasingly apparent. It is interesting to note that on some occasions the evolution of thinking on the need to devise integrated solutions lags behind actual implementation. In short, action often outstrips ability and attitude; the latter arguably entrenched in a conservative longing for Fordist paternalism in some authorities.

Whether such developments at the national and local level were demand-led is debateable, but they have been popular with the individual service consumers and tax-payers who have benefited directly from change. Implications for the broader delivery of integrated government and service delivery were far less favourable, with articulate and competing consumer demands challenging medium to long term strategic planning and on occasion pitting the rights of the individual (enshrined in the "Charterist" culture) against an authority's duty to the community. However, the legislative programme and demand for change has challenged the paternalism of local government, requiring members and officers to refocus their organisation and operation to deal with the new agenda. This process is ongoing, with variations in the progress made from one authority to another. Local authorities have responded with a range of structural, managerial and democratic developments.

Figure 2.3 - Characteristics of the Post-Fordist Local State

Economic	**Social**
Supply-side intervention, promoting competition and labour flexibility. Local economic strategies. Attraction of capital and high-income residents. Private sector involvement in policy making.	Two-tier service provision. Constraints on public spending.
Political	**Managerial**
"Networking" and external focus. Fragmentation of local governance. European community and transnational influence.	"new management" thinking. Dominance of private sector methods. Source : Stoker and Mossberger (1992, 1995)

The "New Managerialism" and the Response to Consumerism

Against the backdrop of the ideological standpoints of Right and Left, a new "managerialism" developed in the mid to late 1980's based on flexibility, customer care and participative management. Stoker (1996b), suggests that: "this vision of accountability rejects the view that the process of service delivery is so complex and uncertain that political and professional judgement provide the only appropriate mechanisms of control. The managerialist claim is that targets and standards can be set, performance can be evaluated and that comparisons can be made about the relative

effectiveness and efficiency of service providers ... A managerial vision of central local relations and their organisation of public services has come to the fore" (p.19).

According to Isaac-Henry (1997), "the philosophy sustaining change differs from those from the earlier period. Whereas the concepts of unity, co-operation, co-ordination and (increased) size had informed the attempts to change the public sector in the 1960's and 1970's, the present themes are of decentralisation, desegregation, competition and markets and efficiency strategies" (p.2). Undoubtedly, increased managerial accountability was "pushed" by central government and growing pressure from civil society, but there were a number of "pull" factors making change attractive. These included enhanced public image, increased staff morale and initial opportunities to re-invest savings from service and managerial review in new areas of activity.

Progressive managers and professionals within local government have acknowledged some of the past failures of paternalism and developed approaches to counter this. However, the resulting managerialist focus is seen as having left managers, professionals and administrators (rather than elected members or empowered consumers/citizens) firmly in control of their hierarchies (Hambleton & Hoggett, 1990). Hood (1990) identifies several doctrinal elements associated with the new managerialist approach: hands on professional management, explicit standards and measures of performance, greater emphasis on output controls, shifts to disaggregation of units in the public sector and greater competition, and stressing private sector styles of management practice, and on discipline in resource use. Stoker (1996b) further suggests that "competitive tendering, the purchaser-provider divide, the publication of league tables of performance and the rise of 'Charterism' are all an expression of the development of managerial accountability" (p.19).

Alongside the rise of managerial accountability, the past 25 years have also seen the more extended use of other forms of accountability. External financial audit, already an established part of the system of financial accountability for local government, was placed in 1970s under the umbrella of the Accounts Commission in Scotland[6]. More specific statutory duties to optimise value for money exist in Scotland under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. Loughlin (1994) argues that these powers serve both to structure the local authority's traditional discretionary power of action and to impose a powerful check on local government decision making. Although aimed at probity and effective management arrangements, Stoker (1997) points out that "enhanced legal accountability can, in the light of a rise of managerial, financial and administrative accountability, be seen as part of a general trend away from a traditional pattern of political accountability (p.20). This in itself does not necessarily undermine the autonomy of local government, although the growth of the central regulatory framework on local authorities could be considered as undermining local discretion and enhancing central control.

Both the National Consumer Council (1986) and the Local Government Training Board (1988) stress the importance of an enhanced customer/public focus in local authority activity. This was formalised in much of the "charterism" introduced by central government in the early 1990s. Thus, in addition to political and managerial initiatives aimed at developing and promoting active citizenship, local authorities have been actively encouraged to attempt to improve services to consumers. However, the growing consideration of the public as "consumers" was also partly a response to increased civil society awareness and expectation and the emphasis on choice of the individual inherent to the New Right agenda (as discussed earlier). Isaac-Henry (1997)

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[6] In England, the Audit Commission was given the same role in the 1980s

indicates that "consumerism is an adjunct to the concept of the market and of competition. Both presuppose the existence of the customer/consumer. On this issue, at face value at any rate, there is a rare bout of agreement by both the Left and Right and by many academics, but the relationship between public services and their users, has in the immediate past, left a much to be desired" (p.13).

However, Hambleton & Hoggett (1990) suggest that this new consumerism has limitations within the public sector for a number of reasons:

- despite recent developments there is still a general lack of available choice;
- consumerism is often seen solely as a cosmetic change to authorities still regarded as unaccountable and inaccessible;
- services tend to have collective benefits rather than solely individual ones; consumerism works against collective goals and favours the individual;
- the provision of a service is not a commercial transaction and cannot be viewed as one;
- local authorities are concerned with good government rather than solely service provision - they must be accessible to the citizens as well as responsive to the consumer; and
- consumerism is often more about customer relations than consumer rights (although Charterism has attempted to change this).

In support of the earlier comments on citizenship, Painter and Isaac-Henry (1997) point out that "if public service consumers are now more valued as a consequence of the public management reforms, this also leaves the question of the social duties and responsibilities that rest more easily alongside a broader notion of citizenship" (p.304). Bearing in mind the role and responsibilities of local authorities to

govern as well as provide services, consumerism fails to deal adequately with the range and complexity of local government activity. Whether the Best Value proposals being developed by the Labour Government move beyond a simple consumer perspective through its emphasis on customer/citizen involvement in sound governance remains to be seen. Indeed, as Painter and Isaac-Henry (1997) suggest, "just when service users are emerging as significant micro level players, so the scope for influencing the larger macro level issues may actually be diminishing, even the professional service deliverers and local politicians finding themselves increasingly excluded at this level. In the prevailing public expenditure climate, the language of restricted entitlement and selective targeting has become more striking" (p.286). In short, increasing fiscal constraint and growing central regulation appear to be undermining existing local authority powers and any real attempts to devolve these to local civil society. The importance of remaining local government paternalism should also not be overlooked.

Decentralisation

Decentralisation appears to be a trend in the development of the social and economic structure of nearly all western democracies (Hambleton *et al*, 1989). Despite this, there has been a tendency in the UK (until the election of a Labour Government in 1997) to centralise power towards central government, ignoring the trends towards regionalism elsewhere (Stewart, 1992). However, many local authorities are now developing or implementing corporate, cross functional or service specific forms of decentralisation through the development of area committees, local offices and one-stop shops. These are typically being progressed within the context of broader strategies aimed at increasing participation and/or informing redistribution. As a

process, decentralisation should be considered as a range of (ideally) integrated democratic, managerial and fiscal solutions to changing political and public demands, often allowing a more informed identification of priorities and subsequent allocation of resources.

As Hambleton and Hoggett (1997) point out, "decentralisation - whether managerial, political or both - cannot be added on at the edge of an organisation. To be effective, the whole organisation needs to be reshaped and a new culture has to be developed". They conclude that "decentralisation is essentially about giving people - members, officers, communities - freedom to act within a defined framework. This framework can be tight, loose, absent or inconsistent. If drawn too tightly, decentralised units have no space to innovate. If it is too loose, absent or inconsistent, decentralised units may flounder or become out of control. Establishing a good centre/local balance between strategic management and local performance management is now rightly seen as a high priority in many innovating councils".

The relationship between the centre and the periphery is thus essential to the ability of decentralising authorities to effectively fulfil their governance and service planning roles. The possible loss of strategic capacity as a result of political and managerial fragmentation and competing accountabilities is a key concern, demanding the structured approach advocated above by Hambleton and Hoggett (1997). If ignored, decentralisation can be at the expense of equity in outcome when decision-making and budgetary controls are devolved, reducing the scope for positive discrimination to even out spatially manifested socio-economic inequalities.

Decentralised working cuts across ideological divides with many authorities developing new approaches to participation and embracing devolved management initiatives (such as devolved budgeting in schools, local involvement in facilities

management and community council representation on area committees). In the 1980s, the sub-text was different, with the Left's focus traditionally promoting active social citizenship whilst the Right take a more consumer-oriented position advocating choice and dismantled power/bureaucracy at the local government level. The New Labour Government is now emphasising both perspectives; most authorities are responding.

Hambleton *et al* (1989) indicate two interpretations of the political push towards decentralisation. Firstly, and that quoted publicly by politicians, is the desire for government (centrally and locally) to be more responsive and accountable to local needs and priorities by increasing local civil society's influence in key decision. Secondly, is the hidden agenda of a managerialist initiative allowing government greater control over local communities. Both intepretations raise questions about the boundaries of the state, the two-way relationship between government and civil society and the power balance between each of the "parties". Either way, decentralisation would appear to potentially facilitate increased state involvement in the local community as well as vice versa, with the former being more easily achieved.

An important distinction requires to be made between managerial and political decentralisation (Burns *et al*, 1994; Gaster and O'Toole, 1995; Burns, 1997; Hambleton and Hoggett, 1997). Despite being potentially mutually supportive, the balance between the political and managerial routes varies from one authority to another depending on the perspectives and priorities of members and officers acting as strategists, managers and gatekeepers. Indeed, political and vocational conservatism can be determining factors in shaping and limiting the design and successful implementation of decentralisation schemes (Burns *et al*, 1994).

Political decentralisation is enshrined in the concepts of subsidiarity and active citizenship, where decisions are taken as close to those affected as is practicable. This

is expressed through democratic innovations including devolving decision-making and consultative powers to local forums (such as area committees), increasing local representation at the centre and/or enhancing levels and channels of participative democracy (Hambleton and Hoggett, 1990). Managerial decentralisation on the other hand focuses on bringing services closer to the public as citizens and service consumers through initiatives such as the devolution of managerial responsibilities and control to local offices, area based service specifications, devolved budgets and increased information and advice on local services to local people (Burns, 1997). Local managers are thus empowered the influence change in the areas they oversee.

Whilst the links between decentralised decision-making and local service delivery are apparent, decentralisation is also aimed at bringing governance as well as service provision closer to communities and individuals within them. This points to some form of active citizen participation. As the Local Government Management Board (1995) points out, "if local government stands for a notion of community, if it is concerned to foster a vigorous civic culture and to improve that quality of life in the broadest sense, then attention must focus on the welfare of the local polity. members and officers need to devote energy, time and resources to strategies designed to improve the quality of government, as well as the quality of services". Participation and a sense of shared community responsibility require to be nurtured.

At first glance, the links between both political and mananagerial decentralisation and increased accountability appear to be clear. However, according to Hambleton and Hoggett (1997), "accountability is a crucial element of local democracy but is relatively underdeveloped ... the traditional concept leaves local citizens in a relatively passive role. However, it is now widely recognised the quality of local democracy hinges upon the quality of active citizenship". The authors point to

the need to further enhance "downward" flows of accountability by widening and developing opportunities for participation and increasing the ability of communities to check the operation of local decision-making and managerial operation.

Certainly, decentralisation can muddy patterns of accountability. As Burns (1997) indicates, "traditionally, accountability related to a simple hierarchy within which it is straightforward to identify who is accountable to who for what. Decentralisation is likely to challenge this in a number of important respects. It is likely to set up competing accountabilities within the formal structure of the organisation and it will tend towards cross-boundary working where accountability is shared and outcomes are negotiated" (p.10). These "boundaries" would appear to cut across areas, member and officer responsibilites and links with local interests to create a complex pattern of accountability within the local arena.

Burns (1997) points to "competing lines of accountability" where devolution of power "means that more people are more directly accountable for their actions, services are located within the community which raises expectations about the extent to which local officers should be accountable to local needs and aspirations. In the decentralised council there will be a greater tendency for staff to feel pulled in more than one direction as different lines of accountability compete for loyalty" (p.11). The means by which the increased pressures for accountability manifest themselves in political and managerial responses (reflecting the needs of citizens *and* service consumers) is therefore likely to vary between authorities and between services. The balance between managerial and political solutions to these pressures is central to this study.

If the ambiguities of competing accountabilities can be addressed, the strengthening of representative and participative democracy advocated by political decentralisation could help boost public confidence in local authorities, making attacks

by central government politically dangerous. Low public expectations at the end of the 1970's allowed the Thatcher Government to introduce many of the policies aimed directly and indirectly at undermining local authorities. However, unless coupled with enhanced service planning and delivery, local democracy itself may not be large enough an issue to increase local interest in local government (Stewart, 1992).

In addition to the concerns about fragmentation of accountability raised earlier, Gaster (1990) indicates a number of problems with the realities of decentralisation, drawn from an analysis of Birmingham City Council:

- there is a tendency for ambiguous and unproven policy assumptions to be made about the possible effects of neighbourhood offices on the accessibility and responsiveness of the council as a whole;
- local level operation often appears to ignore strategic policy devised centrally;
- service integration in local areas is often not as developed as it could be;
- there may be different expectations between front-line staff and centrally based managers, between departments, and between service providers and consumers;
- it may be difficult for the public to access the central decision-making process;
- deeply entrenched departmental organisational cultures can inhibit the development of quality services;
- there can be a lack of effective management and performance information at the centre and in areas.
- there is often a failure to exploit the potential of the front-line staff and closer contact with th public due to the lack of a bottom-up movement of ideas and poor centre/area communications

Undoubtedly, decentralisation offers opportunities for local government politically and managerially to develop closer links with the individuals and communities it serves. However, the blurring of accountability, fragmentation of integrated strategic planning, competing interests and centre/area tensions are pitfalls which can be difficult to avoid. The incremental approach to organisational development and cultural change must be accompanied by an increase in community understanding of the theory and reality of decentralised working and the complexities of the local government environment for schemes to be successful. Only on achieving this can active citizenship through increased participative democracy be developed and utilised.

Political Management

The pressure from civil society and central government for increased democratic and managerial accountability (far from mutually exclusive), enhanced public participation, greater fiscal probity, supply-side diversification and improved services has had knock on effects on patterns of local political management. The local government response has been aimed at strengthening the democratic process in an attempt to make governance more responsive to the demands of the electorate and more flexible in dealing with the increasing volume and complexity of local authority business and their changing roles and responsibilities (Stoker, 1991). This has been progressed whilst attempting to maintain an element of local autonomy.

Ball *et al* (1997) use the term "outward accountability" to cover the more direct links required between members, officers and the electorate demanded by the post-Fordist environment; they also mention Held's (1987) reference to it as "double

democracy", requiring democracy to be extended downwards to the electorate as well as upwards to members. This has been achieved to some extent through political and managerial decentralisation, enhanced participative democracy and a series of political management experiments (such as citizens' juries, co-option, cabinet structures and discussions around elected mayors) considered to a greater or lesser degree by authorities throughout the UK (Walsh, 1995) and now more formally advocated in the Labour proposals for democratic renewal. The traditional "power" of local authorities is considered by some members to be threatened by some democratic innovations. However, Stoker (1991) and Stewart (1995) suggest that the opposite should be the case, with local government's mandate being enhanced as a result. The New Labour Government appears to agree.

In contrast, many of the developments resulting from central government policy have undermined local representative democracy. CCT, School Opt-Outs and Urban Development Corporations have distanced elected members from the decision making process, reducing their influence in key decisions. The growing complexity of local governance heightens demands on members, increasingly diverting their attention away from party political matters towards more strategic management and administration; issues traditionally left to professional officers. In addition, the increasing importance of interest groups has influenced the strength and nature of representative democracy in conflicting ways - challenging its adequacy at the same time as raising member accountability. The democratic response has been varied, but developed within a context for increased accountability and transparency of the decision-making process.

Increased participatory democracy has its dangers, predominantly relating to whether those participating are representative of the interest they claim to serve (and whether all interests are represented) and the tenuous accountability of those choosing

to participate (Dearlove, 1973; Newton, 1976; Stoker, 1991). Attempts to empower can in fact disenfranchise local communities as non-representative sectionalist or individualist interests commandeer participative channels. Stoker (1989) points out that "the institutional fragmentation of local government brings with it a parallel fragmentation of the mechanisms of political representation and control. Collective control through an elected local authority is under challenge from a Conservative programme which hands over control of key services to sectional interests and more generally stresses the role of individual consumer participation in a market-place of the public sector" (p.165). Indeed, the ongoing growth of consumerism threatens to divert local authority attention and resources from finding collective, area-based solutions to local problems. In short, individualism and sectionalism can be the unfortunate outcome of moves to develop and support pluralism.

The increased politicisation and reliance on central manifestos can undermine accountability to the local electorate and challenge their perceptions of representative democracy. On the other hand, the absence of a manifesto makes it difficult for the electorate to hold elected members to account. Stewart (1992) points out that local electoral turnouts in Britain are traditionally low compared to Europe (often below 50%), undermining many assertions of a strong democratic mandate. In addition, effective non-registration can run at between 8 and 11%, being especially high among ethnic minorities and young people (often those most in need of political representation). The tendency for continuous single party control may further undermine local democracy, being indicative of a feeling of inability to change the status quo. Furthermore, local election results tend to reflect national swings in party popularity, with interpretations of particular national policies playing an important role in determining subsequent local representation (Muir and Paddison, 1981). National

party allegiances are therefore extremely important, although the actual extent to which local and national issues influence voting is difficult to define. Often, only consumer oriented participation and pressure groups present checks on local authority activity, demanding political and managerial accountability. The democratic deficit in local government thus is clear to see.

Influence and involvement are essential if the links between civil society and local governance are to be developed; however, a range of vested interests require to be challenged. Stoker (1991) sees the internal politics of local authorities being made up of six arenas of influence:

- the joint elite of senior officers and members;
- the ruling party groups and party caucuses;
- members as ward representatives;
- inter-departmental conflicts;
- intra-departmental conflicts; and
- inter-party deals.

He identifies a range of resources available to competing actors in these arenas, including position in the hierarchy, control over information, and the ability to manage contacts and policy networks. Undoubtedly, such vested interest inhibits the ability of civil society to influence policy and resource allocation outcomes to the extent that progression of effective participation has often involved complex approaches requiring a range of skills by those pressing for involvement. The greater ability of certain groups and individuals to participate as a result was highlighted earlier. Regardless, the undermining of both political and managerial accountability by the complex internal bureaucracy continues to demand change.

The role of members as ward representatives cannot be ignored. In the past, the desire of the Urban Left to develop a more open and participatory form of politics (Gyford, 1985), and the Liberal Party's interest in "community politics" (Punkney, 1983) reflected members' willingness to represent the local population on policy issues. The establishment of area committees, neighbourhood forums, and the decentralisation of local authority offices has since further emphasised the spatial perspective, and can be seen partly as a local government response to sectionalism within society, and increased public demands for accountability and access to services. Stoker (1991) points out that senior majority party members have the power resources to protect and promote their own wards; such powers not being so readily available to more junior or minority party members. However, "backbench members" can influence party group policy through issue politics and support for senior members challenged by group fragmentation.

One of the key political challenges for members is to balance their strategic policy and ward representative roles. This relates again to the blurring of political accountability, with senior members having to consider their duties and responsibilities as community leaders (for the entire council area) with the often competing demands from their ward electorate. This can challenge the objectivity necessary to fulfil authorities' redistributive role, bringing members into conflict with the electorate at a ward and council area level. This mirrors the pressures between area committees and central committees on deciding policy and related resource allocation decisions. It also indicates the paradox between individualism and collectivism.

A further characteristic of the local political scene in the 1980's was the growth of non-elected government and quasi-governmental organisations, and their input into local policy and service provision (Stoker, 1991). Such organisations have no electoral

base but may interact regularly with the local authority. They include joint boards, intergovernmental forums, public/private partnership organisations, locally orientated central government "arms length" agencies (such as Urban Development Corporations and Enterprise Boards), or centrally funded bodies such as Scottish Homes and Grant Maintained Schools. The increasing role of such non-elected local government in economic and social initiatives cannot be ignored and has implications for local democracy.

Whilst an element of these developments reflected the New Right political agenda of reducing the power and strength of local government, it also reflected a desire to find alternative solutions to societal problems which authorities had failed to resolve. In advocating an element of integrated planning and supply-side diversification, central government attempted to both facilitate their own agenda and respond to growing civil society demand for change at the local and national level. Whilst local political intervention appeared absent from many of the arms-length agencies, it could be argued that civil society's frustration with paternalistic local government and the inadequacies of the local democratic process was reflected in the subsequent proposals. The democratic mandate of local government is not as strong as many practitioners have argued. Indeed, the incoming Labour government has not been quick to dismantle "unelected local government", but is relying on a proposed statutory duty of community planning for local government to ensure increased democratic overview of the entire local environment. Amongst other things, this is seen as formalising local community influence in the operation of non-elected government bodies through the empowerment of elected local government to overview their activities.

Inter-Authority Variations

The extent to which local authorities have made the transition to the Post-Fordist patterns of production has varied. This is largely a result of the different attitudes, abilities and actions of key players (members and/or officers) in each authority. The importance of these players as facilitators and gatekeepers of change produces a complex spatially expressed pattern of access to choice and services. Decentralisation and departmentalism mean that these patterns manifest themselves on an inter *and* intra authority basis. As a consequence, these variations have significant knock on effects on the quality of life of individuals and communities.

Following analysis of local government in England, Stoker and Mossberger (1992, 1995) have devised a typology of authorities based on their responses to change:

- **Innovators** : the earliest adopters of new ideas, who most readily implement change, adopting innovation and leadership.
- **Pragmatic Compliers** : authorities which emulate the innovators, adopting programmes only nominally, but wishing to appear up to date. They avoid risk, and although often near the forefront of activity, are seldom innovators themselves.
- **Critical Compliers** : later adopters, often reshaping policies and programmes to meet local circumstances. These authorities could also be innovators in certain situations.
- **Laggards** : later adopters with little need or enthusiasm for innovation. Compliance is usually delayed, and is limited to the minimal requirements.

The extent to which authorities act also relates to the underlying political and socio-economic forces acting on and within each locality. Socio-economic conditions, demographic trends and social structure, the dominant political culture, the role of

pressure groups, and each localities salience in the national political arena, vary from one place to another. Stoker and Mossberger (1992) suggest that across the UK local authorities who are innovators tend to be those in a prime position politically and economically to employ a post-Fordist perspective. At the other end of the scale, "laggards exist outside the mainstream of economic change and national politics, feeling little pressure to change or to conform to any national or professional standards. Usually rural ... neither Fordism or Post-Fordism have provoked many changes" (Stoker and Mossberger, 1992, p.15).

Of perhaps greatest relevance to Central Scotland is the category of "critical compliers", although under the two tier structure the Regional Councils were often more able and likely to be innovators or pragmatic compliers. Despite some benefits in terms of service integration from unitary status, much of the strategic and redistributive capacity has ironically been lost since Reorganisation in 1996 (although allowances must be made during the current transitional period). This is considered in more detail as part of the case study analysis.

Facilitation and gatekeeping of participation and access can be seen to vary from one authority to another based on the attitiude, ability and action of key players "on the production side". Additional socio-economic, geographic and related psychological factors will influence the sophistication of the different electorates in each area to express their demands or grasp opportunities to influence, producing a complex array of factors determining the position of each area in a hierarchy. Similar producer and consumer variables produce hierarchies of access to influence and service goods within local authority areas. Analysis of these and the factors behind them form the focus of this study.

Theories of Local Government

A number of overarching theoretical perspectives have been developed in an attempt to "explain" and "justify" the role of local goverment. These reflect and acknowledge the changing nature of the tri-partite relationship, "proposing" a role for local government *vis-à-vis* central government and civil society.

Stoker (1991) identifies four main theories of local government. Firstly, "localist theory" draws largely on the pluralist tradition, and could be regarded as the prominent ideology within local government at present. Secondly, "public choice theory" represents the approach of the New Right, and can be used to explain Conservative attacks on local government. Thirdly, the "dual state thesis" was the most widely promoted theory by academics in the 1980's. It draws upon the idea of a distinction between policies of social investment and social consumption, the former run primarily by national government, the latter by local government. Finally, "social relations theory" with its neo-Marxist roots echoes some of the thinking that informed the Urban Left during the 1980's. To this we can add the concept of "communitarianism", enshrined in the idea of active social citizenship identified by Luntley (1989).

King (1995) further identifies five perspectives drawn from aspects of these theories. Figure 2.4 summarises the tenets of these perspectives, indicating that variation exists in the nature of thinking and policy on governance within as well as between Right and Left. Perhaps of more interest are the similarities between some of the values and perceptions of the role of local government.

Figure 2.4 - Five Perspectives on Local Government

Ideological Level

New Right ⟷ Left

Variants	Liberal New Right	Conservative New Right	Urban Left	Communitarian	Statist
Values	Liberty, participation and efficient	Central authority/ efficiency	Redistribution/ participation	Liberty, participation and redistribution	Social citizenship
The role of local govt.	Serves community	Central agent	Serves community	Serves community	Central agent
Illustrative policy	Poll Tax	National Curriculum	Enterprise boards	Local Income Tax	Comprehensive education
Policy outcome	Promotes variation and inequality	Central pattern of services within efficiency criteria	Inter-personal/inter-regional variation in services	Inter-personal/inter-regional variation in services	Central pattern to reduce inequality

Source: King (1995), p.243

The localist view, public choice theory and communitarianism have been at the forefront of justifications for the role of local government in recent years. A short critique of these is given in the following sections.

Localist Theory

The localist view stems from the orthodox public administration model valuing local government, but also explicitly argues the merits of local democracy, recognises the need for local authorities to change and moves beyond a formal legislative perspective. Reflecting a broader definition of "enabling" than public choice theorists, the localist view is enshrined in the concept of community governance (Clarke and Stewart, 1991; Stewart, 1995). It is linked to Luntley's (1989) idea of social citizenship rather than a more restrictive perspective of the public as consumers. Community governance involves closer links between authorities and their citizens, considering the role of authorities to be identifying the needs and wishes of communities and taking the required action through planning, procurement/delivery, lobbying (often outwith the local arena) or other means to ensure that these are addressed. Power remains in the hands of local authorities, with local communities able to influence priorities and standards of service. Arguing a forceful case for autonomous elected local authorities with a strong local mandate, the theory has been widely accepted by officers and members as a shield against the attacks of central government.

Jones and Stewart (1983) strongly defend local government in the face of demoralising centralisation by the Conservative Government. They argue that local government is grounded in the belief that there is a value in the spread of power and

involvement of many decision-makers in many localities. Moreover, local authorities are best able to accommodate the specific needs, concerns, and aspirations of each area's population; diversity between areas helping to expand knowledge as new initiatives are tried and tested. They argue that the local base of local government facilitates accessibility, participation and responsiveness, and hence local accountability. It further facilitates the matching of local needs and resources. The findings of the Widdicombe Committee (1986) support this theory, stressing the ability of local government to generate innovation, maximise public choice, and promote pluralism and participation.

Their argument is supported by King (1995) who states that "local government supposedly enhances liberty by forming a bulwark against the power of the state. More recently, scholars argue that local government diffuses power in the political system. Instead of concentrating on political power centrally, local government and the division of power it sustains make the polity pluralist. In Britain, the diffusion argument is important as a political object in a highly unitary state" (p.229).

A simplistic pluralist model is generally regarded as being inaccurate, and localists recognise that local authorities cannot grant equal access to all (Stoker, 1991). Citizen empowerment or ability to influence is thus inconsistent. This situation is inevitable and legitimate providing choices about access are made openly and cautiously by elected members. Moreover, localists acknowledge that the organisational arrangements for redistributive governance and service delivery constrain the capacity for local choice. This includes professional influence taking priority over local interests, and service committees encouraging a narrow functional focus rather than a broad picture of community needs.

In view of the increased power of the centre in central/local relations, the likelihood of the development of autonomous, powerful local authorities is small. Moreover, the New Right argues that too much faith is being placed in the local political mechanism, inherently inferior to market forces and prone to distortion. Lingering doubts also exist on the Left, with assumptions about pluralism regarded as being naive. However, the localist model does suggest that the balance of power in the tri-partite relationship should not lie with central government. Instead, mandated local government should have sufficient autonomy and discretion to carry out its activity, closely influenced by the needs and demands of local civil society.

Public Choice Theory

The market is the optimum mechanism for decision-making and resource allocation for public choice theorists. Public sector expenditure is seen as excessive with a tendency to over-supply services. Such a viewpoint was reflected particularly strongly in the policies of the Thatcher Government when dealing with local government and public sector expenditure. In principle, public choice theory sees power placed in the hands of the service consumer. In practice, it has seen a large element of centralisation of control in an attempt to undermine local government paternalism and promote consumer sovereignty.

As King (1995) points out "for the 'New Right', freedom is defined by the 'power to choose'. Exercising individual choice through local government is a further dimension of the political value of freedom. This objective has it's most rigorous formulation in public choice theory of which the 'Tiebout Hypothesis' is representative. Tiebout argues that for each unit of local government there is a natural 'optimum

community size' based on the mixture of taxes levied and service provided towards which all local governments should strive. This 'optimum community size' will be achieved as a consequence of individual consumers 'searching around' to find that community which suits their needs best. Individual choices determine local authority behaviour" (p.229).

According to Stoker (1991), the public choice theorists argue that party competition results in false promises as politicians seek to maximise their vote. This often leads to deficit funding to spread the costs of current expenditure over future years. Public choice theorists see the market as being a better gauge to preference and demand than the existing democratic system and its arrangements for participation. Self-interested bureaucrats, professionals, and trade unions are regarded as having a dominant position in local government with the tendency to ignore consumer preferences, resulting in the over-supply of inadequate services.

According to Walsh (1995), "the general argument against state provision of services is that operating on bureaucratic and rational planning principles is too demanding of knowledge, information and the ability to make informed decisions to be effective. State bureaucracy will be slow to respond. This broad argument suggests that the state will only be able to operate effectively if it manages to mimic the operation of the market " (p.16).

He suggests that "the best known critical analysis of the efficiency of the public sector is that of Niskanen (1971), who argues that bureaucrats will tend to expand the production of public services beyond the socially optimum level. Niskanen's argument is based upon the classical economic assumption that bureaucrats are rational, self interested, maximisers. Politicians will not be able to prevent the bureaucrats pursuing

budget maximising behaviour, because they are more fragmented, and lack the detail knowledge which is available to the bureaucrat" (p.18).

The view that local authorities tend to over-supply services ignores the key fact that public service provision exists to satisfy local need rather than cost-efficiency. In addition, there has been a general tendency for public choice theorists to take an uncritical view of the market as an alternative to the much maligned local democratic process (Stoker, 1991; Bowers, 1992). Similarly, the problems of coordination and duplication of services in a fragmented system have not been fully considered. Perhaps most importantly, emphasis on consumer choice fails to take into account many individuals' inability to afford the market alternative to subsidised public provision.

Walsh (1995) points out that "there are certain activities that are of such moral significance that they should not be provided by the market, even if they could be, because they will be tainted by the association with financial exchange and profit. The argument for direct provision of public services can be made in value terms as well as in terms of economic efficiency or distributional equity" (p.5). Johnson (1997) is more critical, suggesting that "one reason for the failure of Thatcherism to lay down a foundation for a new settlement on the role of the state lay in the essential contradictions of the project. Thatcherism stipulated and in fact relied on the paradox of the free economy and the strong state. ... Thus an inconsistency was created: that while the public sector was exhorted to be more efficient and slimmer, and to be less bureaucratic and to be more sensitive and thus accountable to its customers, many parts of it were subjected to centralising influences and market reforms which had the effect of increasing bureaucracy" (p.39).

King (1995) points to the political agenda as being an important factor. "The Tiebout Hypothesis is appealing to the New Right for another reason. One imperial

consequence of this theory is the promotion of inter-regional inequality and the diminution of local governments re-distributive role ... the Tieboutian logic imposes costs on local authorities which do pursue redistributive policies" (p.236).

Communitarianism

Advocated by Etzioni (1993) as a theory for application in local government in the USA, communitarianism has subsequently been adopted by a number of academics and local government practitioners in the UK under the banner of "The Citizens Agenda". As Tam (1995) points out, "The Citizens Agenda began as an attempt to provide a common focus to discuss the need to strengthen the inter-related dimensions of community life, democratic citizenship and moral responsibility in the UK. In recent years there has been much talk about the importance of community spirit, family values, civic duties and responsible citizenships. But the debate on their implications for social and corporate behaviour as well as public policies has been fragmented in the absence of an overall agenda". (p1).

The approach is based on the concept of integrating the role of citizens with that of government and the private sector. Power lies in the hands of the community, being shared with (and by) the public and private institutions which support it. Communitarians advocate a new responsible agenda for each of these sectors, coming together to devise policies and subsequently act in a manner which will help tackle society's problems. Through the formation of "democratic communities", citizens must face up to their responsibilities as members of society to establish a workable alternative to the failure of government and the free market to alleviate these problems.

Democratic communities are seen to be characterised by three key features:

- "there is a general recognition that no single one of their members can have an infallible claim to truth, and that only through an open and rational exchange of ideas and information can they arrive at a proper understanding of how to deal with the threats and opportunities they face.
- Their members readily share a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others. They reject the idea that individuals can in the name of freedom pursue their own interests regardless of the implications for other people. Furthermore, social interaction is valued as a fundamental moral good in itself, and not as a means to private ends.
- They are guided by the awareness that co-operation is essential and has to take many different forms in practice; e.g. transactions and negotiations in the marketplace, voluntary action and neighbourhood support, and collective action through accountable public agencies. None of these would be regarded as inherently superior to others, and all of them would be given the appropriate support so that they can fulfil their role in sustaining the common good." (p4).

The Citizens Agenda intend achieving their goals by persuading "opinion formers, media commentators, politicians and government officials, business executives and advisors, leaders of community groups, and public policy theorists of the need to .... combat moral and social decline" (p3). The approach will focus on the following key areas of modern society : the family; education; work; protection (crime prevention and safety); business; government; the media. Each of these sectors are advised to advocate morality and traditional values.

Salmon (1995) sees the resurgence of interest in the community as a "reaction to the rampant individualism of recent years" (p3). Whilst he is critical of the value-loaded nature of communitarianism, he suggests that the concept is seductive for a

number of reasons. Firstly, it acknowledges the existence of a civil society which recognises the importance of community cohesion in the face of individual greed. Secondly, as a theory, it espouses concepts of participation and community involvement and their adoption as mainstream thinking by influential actors. Thirdly, it is attractive to both the political Right and libertarian Left; to the former via the re-adoption of traditional values and a move away from state dependence; to the latter via its emphasis on community support and self help for marginalised groups. Moreover, both perspectives have emphasised the importance of greater personal responsibility and family stability to broader social cohesion. Finally, as a theory, Etzioni's (1993) communitarianism is consensual and conflict free, coming also at a time where the public are becoming increasingly concerned about the role of the private sector and issues such as directors' pay and the profit margins of formerly public utilities.

However, there are a number of concerns about the communitarian approach. Fundamentally, there is the difficulty of applying the American thesis to the UK, with very different cultural, social and political contexts. It could be argued that traditional civil society attitudes towards the interventionist role of the state in general are different on both sides of the Atlantic. Hamnett (1996) suggests that acceptance of reliance on welfare and "social wages" (such as early retirement supplements) is much lower in the US than it is in Europe. Moreover, the emphasis on consumerism is more entrenched in the US, with less defined expressions of "inter-class" relations than are typical in the UK. These factors alter the context within which communites develop and relations with government are nurtured. Secondly, Etzioni's version can be easily hi-jacked by extremists at both the national and local levels. As Salmon (1995) indicates, "at the level, a House of Representatives led by a Newt Gringrich can translate the "parenting deficit" into punitive legislation against one-parent families, and

at the local level, self policing activities in an inner city area can degenerate into physical and verbal abuse of prostitutes." (p7).

Thirdly, communitarianism appears to ignore the economic dimension. How can family breakdown be abstracted from issues such as unemployment, negative equity and low income? Salmon suggests that Etzioni's theory is a subtle means of "blaming the victim." Related to this is the failure of the thesis to address issues of class, race and gender. Bearing in mind the influence of such issues on the ability to access services, this appears to be a fundamental flaw. Salmon (1995) argues that this "search for a 'middle way' has resulted in playing down of the conflicts of interest in society" (p8).

Both Pahl (1995) and Simey (1995) have commented on a fourth weakness. This relates to the failure to understand the concept of "community" and the complex and dynamic nature of local interaction. This sits on top of the additional ambiguity surrounding terms such as "locality" and "the expression of community identity and cohesion" to give the theory foundations which are of dubious strength.

A final criticism relates to the failure by Etzioni to stress the social responsibilities of the private sector. Whilst the Citizens Agenda approach comments on their responsibilities, it identifies no means of ensuring or encouraging the implementation of these responsibilities. With some notable exceptions, business in general might be considered unlikely to address the Citizen Agenda when the required action could prove commercially unattractive. Whether or not initiatives such as the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and the "New Deal" may change this position remains to be seen.

Where communitarianist initiatives have been a success in the UK (e.g. the self-policing scheme in Balsall Heath, Birmingham [Milne (1995)]; the "social networks" in Easterhouse [Phillips (1995)]), this is regarded by Salmon as being set against a

backdrop of extensive community development work and public sector grant support. He concludes by indicating that, "at its best, communitarianism could inspire some useful community based initiatives, but at its worst, it could distract people from pursuing more fundamental solutions to our problems, or be used as a cynical ploy to persuade people that the answer to their plight is in their own hands" (p9).

Whilst there is much to be applauded in the concept of social citizenship, a "purist" communitarianist approach appears flawed and value laden as a means of tackling societal problems. Whilst it does point to the area-based solutions advocated by the Urban Left, the failure to appreciate the complexities of the local political environment, community interrelations and the hierarchy of interest group activity challenge its credibility. However, there is undoubtedly a need to develop a more shared agenda for community development and regeneration. The growing emphasis on inter-sectoral partnership working and community planning may provide opportunities which were not forthcoming during the confrontational central/local relations of the 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, the limitations of physical and managerial decentralisation demand greater community involvement in decision making, policy development and perhaps even initiative management. This role applies equally to all local stakeholders and their need to express then work towards agreed and tangible objectives. The challenge for local authorities would appear to be to drive through this agenda whilst nurturing the active citizenship central to its success.

Conclusion

To conclude, many of the transformations in the organisation and operation of local authorities in the UK can only be considered in the light of broader economic and social changes operating in conjunction with (and impinging upon) central and local government ideology and the demands of civil society. However, the dominant New Right ideology of consecutive Conservative Governments (specifically its emphasis on competition and choice) has directly challenged the role and power base of local authorities and indirectly facilitated growing civil society demand for change. A dynamic tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society (operating at a national and local level) has developed as a result. Whilst imposition of the New Right agenda appears to have been the main driver of change, a more sophisticated public has been more able to express consumerist preferences within the subsequently created markets. Growing professionalisation is likely to see this increase. The power and influence of civil society (both direct and indirect) have thus not been insubstantial.

The development of post-Fordist patterns of service production in public services appears to be evolving in response to these changes. Post-Fordist patterns of consumption are becoming apparent across a range of services ("choose a landlord", school placing requests, use of leisure facilities, private and voluntary sector care homes). This has been facilitated and nurtured by the choice inherent in the New Right agenda. Civil society has exploited the resultant opportunities to influence change, with awareness and expectation increasing as a result.

Members and officers in local authorities act as facilitators of and gatekeepers to the change which does occur. The extent of the local government response has thus

partly depended on the varying attitudes, abilities and actions of these key players in each local authority arena, although the sophistication of the various groups and individuals pressing for change and their social and physical mobility have also been significant. Regardless, these phenomena have produced disparities in influence, participation and service access within and between different local authority areas. The geographical manifestation of these patterns forms the backdrop to this particular study.

Local authorities have responded to the demand for change through a range of managerial and political innovations aimed at strengthening democratic and managerial accountability and increasing civil society's influence in setting priorities and standards of service. This has largely been achieved with a minimal loss in local government autonomy and discretion. These have been more directly eroded by fiscal constraint and increased regulation. The local authority responses to evolving civil society demands have focused on addressing both consumerist pressures for enhanced services and calls for the devolution of power and influence to citizens. The former appears to have been addressed more adequately to date than the latter. Whilst it could be argued that market-based pluralism in service provision has increased under the Conservative Governments (as a result of policies aimed at increasing choice and promoting competition), individual and sectional interests have been promoted at the expense of collectivist strategies aimed at tackling complex societal problems. Reliance on the market as a regulator of public service has allowed elitism to take hold, with certain groups and individuals more able to influence decision-making and access services than others. Moreover, the redistributive role and strategic capacity of local government have been intentionally eroded for political ends, with a hierarchy of service experiences potentially resulting in inequalities in the expectations and life chances of different

individuals and communities. Social mobility therefore appears to be a key factor determining consumption of public services and ability to influence the outcomes of governance and service delivery.

The nature and success of attempts to enhance democratic and managerial accountability have again been dependent on the attitudes, abilities and actions of key players in each authority and the extent to which particular solutions have suited the needs of distinct locales. In some areas, decentralisation has failed to empower local communities, blurred accountability and fragmented the strategic approach to service planning/delivery rather than strengthening the bonds between local government and local civil society. A complex array of lines of accountability exist as a result of diverse and often overlapping managerial and political solutions to the demands for increased participation and enhanced services. At the local level, power appears to largely have been retained by local government. As a result, local authorities have had greater success addressing managerial rather than democratic enhancements in accountability.

The role of local government has been focused increasingly on "enabling", as control is taken by the centre and power devolved to a sub-local state level. Partnership arrangements are on the increase as attempts are made to optimise access to skills and resources and maximise the effectiveness of identified solutions. Whilst "localists" emphasise the need for powerful local authorities (based on the concepts of subsidiarity and community governance), public choice theorists advocate consumer sovereignty, growing reliance on the market, reduced bureaucracy and increased accountability to taxpayers. The two perspectives point to the emphasis on participative citizenship and consumerism respectively. Consecutive Conservative governments have focused on the latter, undermining the more collective strategies developed by many local authorities. The challenge for local government appears to

involve balancing these often competing perspectives (through strengthened democratic and managerial accountability and enhanced opportunities for pluralist participation in policy development and decision-making), at the same time as engendering a less value-laden and more collecti vecommunitarianist approach to active citizenship. This may require further moves away from the paternalism still apparent in local government's failure to effectively empower local civil society. To date, progress appears to have been limited.

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Chapter 3 - Developments in Public Education Management

Developments in the field of public Education management cannot be abstracted from the broader contemporary context within which the Education service operates. Chapter 2 outlined the shift in patterns of service production and consumption in the public sector defined in terms of a purported move from Fordism to post-Fordism. In addition, considerable reference was made to the prevalent New Right ideology of consecutive Conservative Governments and the question as to whether changing patterns of public service production have been imposed by central government rather than primarily being a response to the evolving demands of civil society. Regardless, a dynamic tri-partite relationship has developed between central goverment, local government and civil society expressing itself in shifts in the balance of power, growing central/local tensions, increased public expectations of government and the requirement to enhance democratic and managerial accountability to meet the evolving demands of consumers and citizens.

The influence of these broader factors on public Education management has been particularly salient, with a range of imposed and responding managerial and democratic developments during the 1980s and early 1990s. This chapter examines these developments, the thinking behind them in terms of the arguments raised in Chapter 2 and the extent to which they impinge on each "player" in the tri-partite relationship. It also considers the specific implications of the local government responses to central initiatives for different locales, examining the extent to which they empower or disenfranchise particular groups or individuals.

Four contextual factors require consideration from the outset in explaining the contemporary state of Education (Hewton, 1986). Firstly, "Education is in an

economy which is in recession, or more accurately, in an economy in which public expenditure has been strongly curtailed" (p.7). Secondly, there has been a loss of faith in the belief that Education can be used as a means to overcome socio-economic problems. Thirdly, changing demographic trends[1] have reduced the numbers entering the Education system. Finally, social context can be considered to have an important influence on of service access, educational attainment, personal and service expectations, social and physical mobility and patterns of participation.

A Post-Fordist Approach in Education?

Changes in the pattern of production and consumption in public Education have broadly mirrored those in other public service areas. Similarly, the debate on the extent to which changing production patterns have been imposed or primarily demand-led is equally applicable. Undoubtedly, planned monopoly Fordist provision of public Education by local education authorities (LEAs) was the norm from the introduction of comprehensive schooling until the late 1970s. As Sackney and Dibski (1994) indicate, "the school based management reform movement assumes that the problems in today's schools are caused by the highly centralised controls to which schools have become subject. ... (Subsequent) School based management has been viewed as a proposal to de-bureaucratise system control and to make the school more responsive to the needs of its clientele. The assumption is that if decisions are made closer to the client, better decisions will be made and greater satisfaction will prevail" (p.105).

[1] Changing residential preferences are also significant in urban areas, with suburbanisation and counter-urbanisation causing redistribution between different parts of the city and its environs.

Centrally imposed change in Education management has been aimed at empowering service consumers, increasing managerial accountability, strengthening democratic accountability through increased participation (primarily through school governing bodies) and enhancing the performance of individual schools. As such, changes in the production process have attempted to take a consumer *and* citizen focus. However, a 1994 report by the Research and Information on State Education (RISE) Trust suggests that "there is a real tension between the role of consumer allotted to the parents by recent legislation and their desire for a more participative partnership with teachers, heads and politicians at all levels. ... Manifestations of parent power are random, dependant very often on the energy of individual parents and encouragement of individual professionals and/or politicians. All, including statutory parent governors, are liable to have their influence subverted, over ridden or ignored by professionals and/or elected representatives who are of that mind" (p.30). It again becomes apparent that access to power and influence is inconsistent within and between different locales. The adequacy of the policy response to the broad principles of improved customer service and enhanced democratic accountability, combined with the attitude, ability and actions of key players in the local arena thus become important factors in determining the extent to which the service delivers its intended aims.

The Central Government Agenda

As the state is directly responsible for the bulk of educational provision in most countries (directly delivering in most instances and further regulating any part of the service provided privately), political influence becomes a particularly important factor when considering policy and practice in Education. As outlined in the opening

chapters, the dominant ideology of the consecutive Conservative Governments since 1979 has led not only to an attack on public expenditure, but also the promotion of the free market, competition, public choice and enhanced patterns of local accountability. In addition, as Hewton (1986) and Bondi (1988) indicate, the political debate about Education itself has changed, with new political ideologies transforming discussions about the provision of Education and other services. According to Baron (1981) this transformation has been facilitated by the gradual breakdown of the post-war social democratic consensus, reflected in Education by the erosion of belief in the service during the 1970's.

Parental choice legislation has reflected the importance of consumer empowerment and subsequent competition between schools in the LEA sector. At the same time, powers and responsibilites have been devolved to governing bodies and individual schools. This has been accompanied by supply-side diversification through the introduction of grant maintained (GM) schools, "opting out" of local authority control and funded directly by central government. Politically, these moves reduced the role and associated strength of local authorities. Moreover, where opted out schools "fragmented" the local area, established principles of area-based social engineering (pursued through comprehensive Education and policies of positive discrimination) were undermined. Nonetheless, Lomax and Darley (1995) indicate that "in some quarters the demise of the LEA was welcomed. It was thought the local bureaucracies were stifling the potential creative energy of individual schools; that parents and students had been denied a fair deal because of the paternalism of the system" (p.149).

During the 1980's, the effectiveness of individual schools again became the political and academic focus after a period of relative neglect (Reynolds, 1985;

Bradford, 1989). Attention had been focused on social context and its effects on pupil performance (eg. Robson, 1969; Garner, 1988), or the relationship between the educational system and wider societal processes and structures (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The findings of such studies indicated that the social (material and cultural) context affects pupil performance and aspirations to the extent that social inequalities could not be offset by schooling, and therefore policies of positive discrimination were largely redundant (Bradford, 1989).

According to Bradford (1989), "the New Right, amongst others, has taken up the connection between the capitalist system and schooling but has reversed the direction of causality and criticism. The Education system is viewed as one of the major reasons for the difficulties of particular economies ... in that its standards in general are not sufficiently high or that its curricula are not appropriate for the present needs of the economy " (p.2). The individual school has thus come to be seen as a "promoter of excellence" through its role as the provider of future labour.

As a package, the detail and school-based focus of the Education reforms imposed by the New Right demonstrated central government's commitment to public choice theory as a dominant ideology. Centralisation of control and devolution of power undermined the localist arguments about the fundamental role of democratically elected local government in integrated community governance. Similarly, the focus on the etablishment (in its own right), rather than its role in the context of the broader community, challenged the development of a broad communitarianist approach. Strain (1995) suggests that "for educationalists, suppression or marginalisation of the community threatens the formative relationship between social structures and processes and the quality of individual learning" (p.7). He suggests that "the market brings with it no necessity to ensure the fulfilment of

intrinsic moral values, whether religious, communitarian or democratic. The good is served by whatever is conceived by individuals to serve the interest of the self" (p.9). Indeed, the competitive market of schools results in the "route to excellence" being influenced by an individual's ability to access schools within the Education hierarchy, thus producing the fragmented labour market characteristic of advanced capitalist societies. Whilst the more collective arguments have been revitalised in the mid to late 1990s, the contradictions between the public choice focus and localist/communitarianist perspectives caused conflict between each "party" in the tri-partite relationship. Further concerns existed about empowerment of consumers and individual establishments at the cost of service fragmentation and the loss of the redistributive capacity of the LEA.

Changing Central/Local Relations in Education - A New Role for the LEA

In line with the general trend in central/local relations, the legislation of the 1980s and early 1990s has allowed centralisation of control by central government and the devolution of responsibilies to individual schools, effectively squeezing the powers of LEAs at both ends (Bondi, 1988; Hoggett, 1992; Walsh, 1995; and Johnes, 1995). As a result, the complexity of the dynamic tri-partite relationship between central and local government and civil society becomes particularly apparent, with demands for new patterns of accountability to reflect the changing powers, responsibilities and relationships between each player. For example, patterns of parental choice may threaten the educational viability of some schools. Local authorities now have greater powers to make decisions about closing schools, this being indirectly supported by the reduction in the ability to continue to fund such establishments as a result of financial

constraints. At the same time, many parents whose children continue to attend such schools are vociferously opposed to the specifics of school closure, whilst the broader taxpaying body demand efficiencies and value for money. To a large degree this has intensified the stresses between local authorities and the communities they serve, at the same time as heightening animosity between local and central government.

The blend of aspects of planned and market based approaches creates a complex challenge for LEAs. The Audit Commission (1996) point out that "the recent reforms have established schools as more or less independent players in the Education market. Schools will thus, quite properly, respond to market pressures and pursue the interest of their own community while LEAs retain the responsibility for pursuing the interest of the whole community. This creates increased scope for friction between schools and LEAs, and reduced opportunity for the easy resolution of such difficulties." (P.9). In short, the balance of power within the LEA is being shifted away from the centre towards the individual school, threatening the overall strategic capacity of the LEA as a result.

Ranson (1995) makes the case for LEA control, arguing that the educational arguments for democratic local government develop in three stages:

- "learning is inescapably a system: learning is a process which cannot be contained within the boundaries of any one institution. ...
- Education needs to be managed as a local system: the system of learning is more effective if managed locally, as well as nationally and at the level of the institution ...
- Education needs to be a local democratic system: if Education is, as it should be, a public service of and for the whole community rather than merely the particular parents, young people and employers who have an immediate and proper interest

in the quality of Education provided, then it must be responsive and accountable to the community as a whole" (pp.121 - 122).

Hutchinson (1993) concurs, arguing that "what is most worrying about the removal of schools from the LEA is the loss of a consistent voice pressing for sustained school improvement. ...Whatever their faults, local authorities have provided a focus for local opinions and have ensured that priorities within the Education service have to some extent reflected the particular needs of the area. As the LEA declines some means must be found of involving local people in the work of the schools so that the local democratic process at present provided by the local authority is replaced in some measure by strengthened links with local communities" (pp.10-13). At the moment, local communities have limited influence on the service.

From a localist/communitarian perspective, the apparently flawed New Right agenda demands a renewed role for democratically accountable LEAs in the future: "first, because the inadequacies and inherent inconsistencies of present policies are already creating problems that will have to be addressed; secondly, and more importantly, because it is not healthy for a democracy that we should be ruled by over-centralised government which is busily replacing elected local representatives with a myriad of appointed quangos" (Benn and Benn, 1993, p.67). However, whilst arguing the localist case, they consider that none of the tasks essential to a revived local government "can be established successfully without re-establishing the accountability of local government to an electorate. The erosion of this democratic link is possibly the most serious loss of all that recent (education) reforms have entailed, and it is the change least likely to prove acceptable in the long run" (p.70). In short, whilst power and autonomy must be retained by the LEA, there is a need for increased civil society influence on the outcome of the service planning/delivery process.

Changing Civil Society Demands

As outlined in the opening chapters, the public service arena has been characterised by growing public expectation of government and the services it provides in terms of enhanced accountability, greater choice, and improved quality and value for money. At a national and local level, civil society has been pressing for increased access to and outcome from a better quality Education service. Parents' awareness and consumer-oriented expectations have grown, largely in response to the demands from employers for a better trained and more diversified workforce. Moreover, as citizens and stakeholders in Educational outcomes, civil society increasingly draws links between effective schooling and the alleviation of broader societal difficulties (such as crime, unemployment, immorality, etc.).

As Barns and Williams (1997) indicate, recent consumer-oriented developments "imply that parents/pupils are able to influence the shape of 'products' offered them by competing schools. As consumers in a marketing culture, it is assumed that parents/pupils are empowered to exercise choice, enjoy access to the physical and information aspects of Education, actively participate in some school decisions and benefit from an Educational system whose *raison d'être* is to provide a responsive public service " (p.161). At the same time, consumers are becoming more sophisticated in their attitude towards accessing opportunities for Educational advantage, to some degree confirming that growing demand is an increasingly significant factor in shaping government response. A 1994 report for the OECD by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) points to changes in civil society which have direct implications for the way Education is provided and consumed: "the growing tendency of citizens and workers to formulate their own

demands and to plan their own learning pathways is increased by the notion of learning as an investment, with tangible benefits to the individual. In particular, greater social and geographical mobility and a growing average educational level of parents has changed the way in which schools are regarded. Education is viewed by an increasing number of people as a route to social and economic success, and finding the right school is often seen by parents as a way of giving their children a good start in life" (pp.12-13). Parental choice applications and pressure for school "opting out" are symptomatic of the self-perpetuating pressure for change.

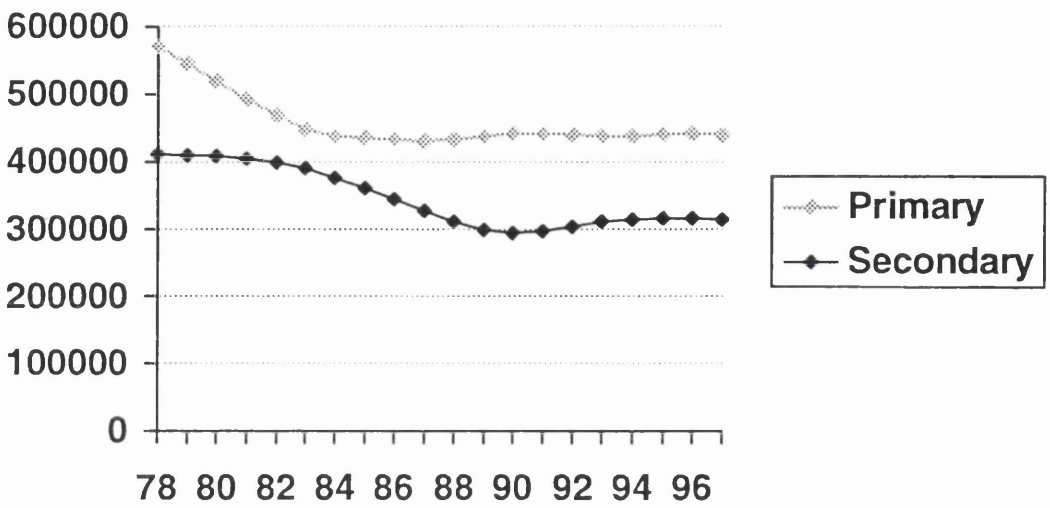
From a less individualistic perspective, positive discrimination in Education provision is an important means of reducing social divisions and access to subsequent life chances. Regardless of equal access to comprehensive Education and a common curriculum, the various forms of social disadvantage which characterise paricular locales result in certain groups being unable to achieve the same level of Educational access or attainment (Moulden and Bradford, 1984; Garner, 1988). Material factors (such as poverty, unemployment, housing and health) and cultural factors (such as child rearing practices, language and parental attitudes) play an important role in distinguishing patterns of access within and between different locales. They also determine the ability of individuals to exploit opportunities to influence the nature of the service. In each locale, these factors have "a significant effect upon how schools 'live' within markets ... there is no one Educational market, but a series of overlapping and inter related local markets, each one distinguished by a particular configuration" (Bowe *et al*, 1995, p.65). MacBeath (1992) - in a paper commissioned by the Scottish Office Industry Department - opens by stating: "children growing up in deprived inner cities and outer estates do significantly less well at school than their counterparts in better off areas. This is now so well documented by research that there are few who

would even question it. At a common sense level the intuition of most people would be 'How could it be otherwise?'" (p.1).

In many cases, the nature of the locale thus becomes a key determinant in ability to redress social disadvantage as well as acting as a disadvantage in its own right. In response, area based positive discrimination has been aimed at reducing spatial disparities in relative disadvantage. On the whole, such policies have been implemented by local authorities as part of broader all-encompassing and area based social strategies. The particulars of the Strathclyde Regional Council response are outlined in Chapter 4.

The operation of policies of positive discrimination and the market in Education have been further affected by changing demographic and residential trends. MacFadyen and McMillan (1984) point to the decline in pupil numbers as a phenomenon affecting most Westernised countries during the late 1970's and 1980's, with urban areas (inner cities in particular) being hardest hit. Such a trend has taken place alongside economic restructuring and population shifts, with de-industrialisation and counter-urbanisation causing problems for particular urban localities as a result of declining economies, populations and associated tax bases (Gyford, 1991). In short, demographic and (particularly) residential change had implications for different schools in different locales, with many inner urban areas experiencing a rapid reduction in pupil numbers whilst suburban areas saw a related increase. Figure 3.1 illustrates the decline in the number of pupils in Scottish schools from 1980/81 until 1991/92, with a levelling out during the latter part of the decade preceding a rise in pupil numbers in the early 1990's.

Figure 3.1 - Scottish LEA Pupils 1978-1997



Source: Figures provided by the Scottish Office Education Statistics Division, 1998

The fall in pupil numbers has had serious implications for the educational viability of many schools, with shifting demographic and residential trends forcing LEAs to develop strategic school rationalisation programmes to ensure supply falls more into line with changing demand. Closure has undermined the idea of the "neighbourhood school" and associated community cohesion traditionally advocated by the political Left. The progression of Educationally-focused elements of area based strategies is undermined as a result.

Despite a reversal in the decline of pupil numbers in many areas in the 1990s, the Audit Commission (1996) suggest that situation may deteriorate: "beyond the take-up of unfilled places, the growth in the school age population is being met more by an increase in overcrowded schools that by the addition of new capacity - and while this approach may be economic, its effectiveness is questionable. The

secondary school population is projected to increase by 12% between 1996 and 2004, suggesting that, in parts of the country, problems around insufficient places may get worse. Some authorities may face, simultaneously, both insufficient and unfilled places in different parts of their area" (p.14). This point on surplus capacity was also picked up by the Accounts Commission in Scotland in their analysis of Education service statutory performance indicators in the Scottish unitary authorities in 1996/97 (Herald, 22 May, 1998).

Legislating for Change - Specific Policies and their Implications for the Tri-partite Relationship

Since 1979, the significant legislation relating to Education clearly reflects the New Right agenda of increasing choice, competition and accountability. The reforms can be considered under two headings - those related to content and teaching methods (the national curriculum in England and Wales, national primary testing, and the 5-14 Programme), and those related to its structure and management (Parental Choice, devolved school management, school boards, and grant maintained schools). It is the structural and management elements on which this paper aims to focus. Further distinction can be made between reforms enhancing the role of consumers in Education and those associated with enhancing participation and empowering citizens.

LEAs have responded with a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening democratic and managerial accountability whilst minimising the effects of the reforms on their own role. Despite this, questions have arisen as to the ability of producers to respond to more sophisticated consumer and central government demands. Leven and Riffel (1997) argue that "school systems do not have good processes for learning

about and responding to changes in their environments except in a very narrow sense. These limitations are not the result of ill will or incompetence, but of long ingrained patterns of thought and behaviour that will not be easy to change, no matter what policy makers may promulgate. "(p.44). The following sections focus on the effects of recent reforms on the Scottish Education system, drawing comparisons with the position in England and Wales where appropriate.

Parental Choice - the Market in LEA Provision

The Education (Scotland) Act 1981 (popularly known as the Parents' Charter) gives parents in Scotland the right to choose the schools which they wish their children to attend. Such moves are part and parcel of New Right attempts to empower service consumers. Since 1982, parents have been able to make "placing requests", allowing their child to be considered for a school other than that allocated by the LEA. The LEA has little option but to grant this request (unless one of a number of statutory grounds for refusal applies), with parents having the right to appeal to the Secretary of State in the event of refusal. Although the primary impetus for parental choice came from south of the Border, Scottish parents appear to have stronger rights than those in England and Wales (Statham *et al*, 1989). This is manifested in enhanced rights of appeal and the narrower range of statutory grounds for refusal. Moreover, it was not until the Education Reform Act 1988 that parents in England and Wales were formally granted the right to choose.

Despite this, Adler *et al* (1995) consider that "supply side de-regulation in Scotland has probably proceeded less far than in England and Wales. Moreover, since all Education authorities in Scotland allocate children to schools on the basis of school

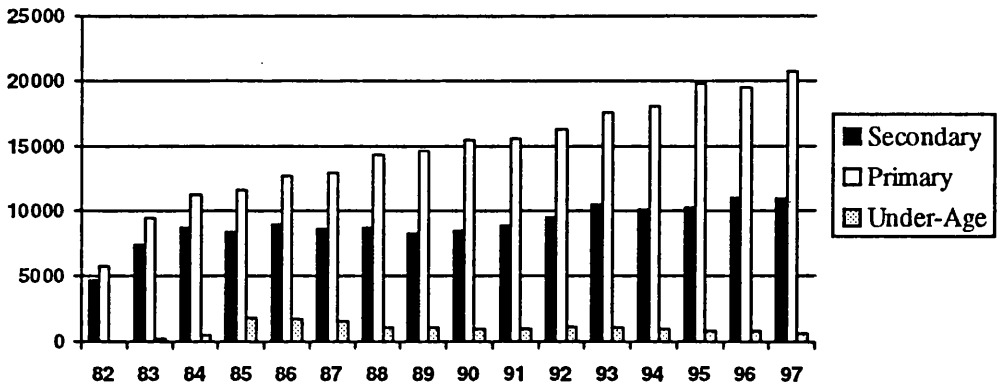
catchment areas (while many LEAs in England and Wales have abandoned zoning and operate what are, in effect, free choice systems[2]), demand side de-regulation has, in spite of similar statutory provisions, also proceeded less far than in England and Wales. Thus, taking into account the de-regulation of demand and supply, it is probably true to say that competition between schools is more limited and schools are less subject to the discipline of market forces in Scotland than in England and Wales" (p.2).

Figure 3.2a - Placing Request Levels in Scotland

The number of placing requests in Scotland doubled in the first four years following the 1981 Act, from 10,456 in 1982 to 20,795 in 1985 - with an initial levelling off in the rate of increase in requests by 1985 (Raab and Adler, 1988). Whilst there has been a fairly continuous increase in primary school requests since then, there has been far greater consistency in the level of secondary requests. The level has remained at the 8,000-11,000 per annum level (c. 2.5 to 3% of the secondary population) since 1984, with only slight fluctuations during that period. This may in part reflect the ceiling on the levels of choice apparent in a smaller and contracting secondary market. The majority of requests have been for children entering the first year of school (either primary or secondary), with well over 90% of the requests for placings being granted.

[2] Glasgow Unitary Authority are also currently considering abandoning zoning within the city

Figure 3.2b - Placing Requests Received by Scottish LEAs 1982-1997



Source: Adapted from the Scottish Office (1991 and 1998)

It is important to note that although a significant proportion of parents make placing requests, most children attend their local school. The CERI Report (1994) concludes that, "even under policies to promote school choice, the pull of the nearest neighbourhood public school remains powerful. Transport considerations, the desire to go to school with neighbours and friends, the cost of private schooling and normal expectations mean that most children in most OECD countries attend the closest school unless there is a specific reason not to do so" (p.23).

Undoubtedly, where it has occurred, parental choice has been a significant factor in the public Education system since 1981. The CERI Report points out "that the proportion of 'active choosers' does not have to be large to have a significant impact on school systems. This is particularly true where schools' resources are directly linked to enrolment. If a public school looses 10% of it's pupil intake and therefore 10% of its revenue, the impact is usually severe, as a class with 27 pupils

does not cost less to teach than one with 30. The incentive for schools to compete for pupils under open enrolment rules is therefore usually great" (p.23).

Raab and Adler (1988) argue that national figures mask considerable regional and local variations. Requests have been more common in urban areas than in rural areas, largely due to the greater number of schools and the shorter distances between them, but also reflecting the "sharper" socio-economic divisions of urban populations. Figures therefore need to be considered at a sub-national and sub-regional level. The number and location of independent (private) schools in an area is also important. Parents who are dissatisfied with their local schools may have little opportunity to take up a place at an independent school (due to lack of schools in the area, distance to the nearest of these, or inability to meet fees), and are therefore more likely to make placing requests.

Figure 3.3 - Objectives of Parental Choice

- "to respond to an increased desire to choose among existing schools, extending to everybody opportunities hitherto available only to those with the financial means to buy either private education or housing near good schools;
- to create a new discipline encouraging schools to perform well: schools that acquire a good reputation will get more 'customers' and more resources;
- to give the values of parents a new place in determining school behaviour: the values of professional educators are not necessarily shared by parents;
- to extend the range of educational choices available: in the past, a number of countries have supported pluralism in schooling by subsidising private religious schools; choice might also support educational pluralism, potentially in the public as well as the private sector" (p.13).

Source: The CERI Report (1994)

Gambetta (1987) suggests three general viewpoints explaining patterns of choice:

- a **structuralist viewpoint** - where external constraints limit choice to a minimum of acceptable alternatives (a situation heightened by LEA monopoly of public provision). There is a need for diversity in existing provision to satisfy post-Fordist patterns of consumption;
- a "**pushed from behind**" viewpoint - where the individual decision is of minimal importance, the key factors being the social or psychological pressures "forcing" the action; and
- a "**pulled from the front**" viewpoint - where the parent makes a choice based on the positive factors displayed by an alternative school/catchment.

Whilst the majority of placing requests appear to have been to an adjacent school, "pushed" and "pulled" moves to catchment areas containing fewer socio-economic problems have been commonplace (Raab and Adler, 1988; interview responses from Chief Officers at Strathclyde Region). Practitioners confirm that decisions are often based on the perceived benefits from an enhanced social environment, rather than a knowledge of the Education process or experience in each school. This questions Gambetta's (1987) assertion that lack of educational diversity constrains choice. There is further evidence to suggest that the dominant culture in a school also influences the aspirations of pupils, and their chances of achievement (Labov, 1972; Bernstein, 1977). According to Bondi (1988), particular groups appear to be "alienated by the schooling they receive and respond in ways that restrict their future opportunities" (Page 11).

David *et al* (1994) suggest that "there is now substantial research to show that the placement decision occurs as part of a much wider network of social interactions, particularly between parents and children in general in the locality, interactions which are used both as a source of information and a source of more impressionistic judgements about the 'reputations' of schools" (p.17). Drawing from the work of West and Varlaam (1991), West *et al* (1991), Stillman and Maychell (1986), Raywid (1985) and Hughes *et al* (1990) they point to the factors outlined in Figure 3.4 as being significant in determining choice. They conclude that "there are three features of schools that, taken together, can be positively identified as being the reason for opting for a particular school - what we have called the 3 P's - the academic results or performance; the atmosphere/ethos or pleasant feel; and the schools location or proximity to home" (p.136). Indeed, the argument may be even simpler, with Fenton (1995) arguing that parents are often mainly interested in the care taken to ensure that their child's school experience is a happy and fruitful one.

Figure 3.4 - Reasons for Making a Placing Request

• attainment levels	• child preference
• school reputation/ethos	• discipline
• proximity	• single sex school
• subjects/facilities	• marketing/publicity/promotion
• familiarity with school/area	• head teacher
• sibling/peer attendance	• size

Source: Adapted from David *et al* (1994)

Macbeth (1989) suggests that parents pay only limited attention to information made available to them and that decisions are commonly based on preferences between only two schools, rather than on a strategic overview of the options available. Baron (1981) argues that this is because parents generally lack adequate details to make informed decisions about which school to send their child(ren). Indeed, the Audit Commission (1996) concur: "some LEAs offer parents insufficient information and advice to assist with the expression of preferences, often producing admissions brochures that appear to have been written with lawyers and officials, rather that parents, in mind" (p.28).

Regardless, access to choice (and the existence and operation of a market of schools) is a significant factor, with substantial evidence suggesting the absence of a level playing field. The CERI Report (1994) highlights a number of justifiable concerns:

- groups that have always been more privileged educationally will do most of the choosing (the same people that might potentially choose good schools by selecting their place of residence or paying for private Education may also be best placed to take advantage of extra choices theoretically open to all - they may have better access to information and to transport, and broader horizons;
- as popular schools fill up choice quickly becomes closed off;
- social cohesion in small communities might be weakened by the disappearance of clear catchment areas defining a schools clientele, or by fierce competition between two neighbouring schools;
- choice may reduce the potential for improving public Education as a single system (through the development of GM schools or enhancement to private sector schools) and hence eventually will harm public education quality;

- choice out of a local school may undermine it's educational viability for the majority of pupils/parents in that area; and
- the attention of schools will be focused on marketing rather that the quality of Education.

A study by the Canadian Center for Educational Sociology (CCES) (TES(S), 7 December, 1992, p.3) of parental choice in Scotland found that parents who exercise the right to choose tend to be more highly educated and in more prestigious occupations than those who do not. They are more adequately empowered by the current legislation than the majority of parents. Gewirtz *et al* (1995) concur: "even where a reasonable degree of choice of school exists, a recent study (in London Boroughs) has found considerable class based differences in family orientation to the market both in terms of parental inclination to engage with it and their capacity to exploit the market to their children's advantage. The market is a middle-class mode of 'social engagement' where knowledge of, and understanding of, the local Education market provides distinct advantages in enhancing the life chances of the children. You are first distinguished between 'privileged/skilled choosers', 'semi-skilled choosers', and the 'disconnected'" (quoted in Barns and Williams, 1997, p.173). The first two categories might be seen as reflecting the top and middle of the occupational hierarchy referred to by Hamnett (1996). These groups typically comprise professionals, growing in number as an outcome of socio-economic restructuring and the associated decline in skilled middle income manufacturing jobs. The "disconnected" would thus comprise the "residual" population at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Regardless, these patterns of choice have often resulted in increased segregation between upper and middle income households and their lower income counterparts, accentuated because the parents and pupils best placed to effect change in schools are

most likely and able to exercise choice. The CERI Report (1994) concludes that this phenomena exists in a number of OECD countries. This reinforces the findings of Moulden and Bradford (1984) and Garner (1998) regarding the links between social context and attainment, pointing to the existence of inter and intra locale variations in access, influence/empowerment and outcomes.

Strain (1995) expresses stronger concerns, suggesting that "by combining open enrolment with a determined policy of rationalisation of school places within an individualistic and anti-communitarian culture, less fortunate families are required to be unsuccessful in their expression of choice, and their children forced to attend schools other than their chosen one in order to fill up places in less favoured schools. The mechanisms are capable of transforming the community into a ghetto; the disadvantaged individual into a social casualty for whom no caring or other need be concerned, outside the accidental associations formed by birth and residence" (p.18).

The extent to which parental choice has actually raised Educational standards requires particular consideration. The CCES Report (1992) finds that the attainment gap between the groups has been reduced over the period since parental choice was introduced in 1981. However, the overall improvement in academic results across the board appears to have been negligible. As Munn (1990) points out, "while parental choice is strong on rhetoric for school improvement and increasing school responsiveness to parental concerns, such research evidence as we have about the operation of the 1981 Act suggests otherwise " (p.3).

Moreover, does a market (or pseudo-market) in LEA provision really exist? If so, is such a market-based approach "healthy"? Hardman and Levacic (1997) indicate that "the existence of surplus capacity along with evidence of the annual re-distribution of the incoming pupil cohort amongst groups of closely located schools

together indicate that competition between schools as a result of parental choice can and does arise. Moreover, almost all schools in the sample demonstrate recruitment changes that are consistent with the presence of competition. ... In tandem with these developments, the distribution of the annual LEA budget amongst the schools within each authority is changing over time and trends are emerging which further indicate that competitive pressures are being brought to bear" (p.132). However, the CERI Report (1994) concludes that no real market exists and that demand pressures themselves are rarely enough on their own to create Educational diversity. It suggests that initiatives to diversify Educational supply may therefore be needed to create a genuine set of choices, perhaps emphasising the importance of stronger moves towards grant maintained schools as a means of breaking down the previous public sector monopoly. The report suggests that "under the current uniform model of schooling, choice is more likely to reinforce educational hierarchies than to improve educational opportunities or overall quality" (p.8).

Woods *et al* (1995) concur, arguing that "the assumptions that producers can or wish to change in accordance with parental wishes, that parents have perfect information on which to base decisions, that 'popular' schools can expand or be reproduced, that 'unpopular' schools can go to the wall, that all parents can afford the hidden costs of choice (particularly the travel time and transport), do not hold true in the real world. ... (However), we should not beat a wholesale retreat from the idea of consumer responsiveness or an appreciation that the attention given to choice and competition may have beneficial effects as well as dangers" (p.3). Indeed, "at it's best, greater emphasis on choice and competitiveness encourages schools to respect families - both parents and children - in a way that they did not before, and to prove themselves in ways that parents and children appreciate" (p.4). The CERI Report

(1994) also points to both advantages and disadvantages drawn from the broader European context: "there is no direct evidence that this competition improves school performance. However, the dynamic of competing for pupils typically enhances some school characteristics associated with effectiveness, such as strong leadership and sense of mission. Moreover, choice that increases consumer satisfaction can be seen as desirable not only for its own sake, but also because parents and children who support a school help to make it more effective" (p.7).

Ranson (1995) remains sceptical, suggesting that "markets deny opportunity for most: supporters as well as opponents acknowledge they create inequality. In Education they work like this. Competition forces schools to see each other as rivals striving to gain the advantage that will secure survival. From this rivalry emerges a hierarchy of esteem with schools increasingly inclined to 'select' and 'exclude' pupils so as to produce a school population likely to shine in the national league tables, as well as local 'coffee circles'! In this market hot-house only some parents are likely to acquire their 'choices': those with time, resources, knowledge and confidence to 'promote' their children; and those with 'able' children" (pp.120-121). In short, markets cannot resolve the predicaments resulting from economic and residential restructuring, the fragmentation of traditional communities and the growth of individualism present issues of well being, rights and justice which cannot be easily resolved. The paradox between consumer and citizen perspectives is clear to see. Barns and Williams (1997) concur: "the view that recent reforms might foster 'healthy' competition between schools, thereby enhancing the offerings available to a discriminating consumer, seems unlikely. Many schools will be faced in the invidious position of competing with each other in a strictly finite market. In circumstances such as these, one school's gain is another's loss, possibly leading to unethical

behaviour" (p.177). Indeed, whilst the jury remains out on the Educational benefits of parental choice, open competition in its current form has undermined the concept of the "neighbourhood school", diminishing community cohesion and undermining broader strategies of area based regeneration (whether based on traditional local government redistribution or broader communitarianist reforms).

Budgetary Devolution - Empowering Local Competitors and/or Strengthening School Accountability?

Budgetary devolution cannot be abstracted from the broader New Right agenda and the other reforms discussed in the chapter. It is intended to give schools greater responsibilities for their own operation, directly aimed at strengthening managerial accountability. The formal powers of governors in England and Wales and indirect involvement of board members in Scotland is intended to produce a democratic check on local (school-based) managerial activity, empowering each individual school as a player in the Education market. It is also a means of enhancing the fiscal and managerial accountability of each establishment, ideally delivering value for money savings in the medium term. Introduced in England and Wales under the Education Reform Act 1988 and in Scotland following guidance from the Scottish Office in 1993, budgetary devolution has been considered by the New Right as a half-way house in the road towards grant maintained status (discussed later in the chapter). The devolution of financial control to schools involves some separation of income from expenditure. Budgets therefore do not automatically balance, encouraging schools to increase income through attracting more pupils and developing commercial initiatives (such as the letting of school facilities). As the Audit Commission (1996) point out,

budgetary devolution "has created some incentives for schools to compete for pupils: at least 80% of the authority wide delegated revenue budget is allocated on the basis of pupil numbers, so money will follow pupils to the popular schools (and unpopular schools will lose income)" (p.9).

Devolved budgetary control emphasises the key role of the head teacher in managing the local school environment. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Raab and Arnott (1995) argue that "it is clear that the style of Headship is central to the organisational structures and the decision making processes that develop in schools. Both head teachers and other teachers are aware of the Heads changing role, as functions that are delegated from the LEA to the school make it difficult for Heads to square their professional and bureaucratic sources of authority over teachers" (p.12). Interestingly, tensions between professional and managerial conceptions of the role of the head teacher appear to be more keenly felt by staff and heads as a result of the particular characteristics of devolved management. Although budgetary devolution in principle loosens the hierarchical relationship between schools and the LEA, in the minds of many it tightens it between heads and other teachers as managerial and financial routines are brought inside the school itself to sit very uneasily alongside the professional culture and values of Education.

Raab and Arnott (1995) also suggest that "it is difficult to see a clear pattern in which schools under devolved management are redefined as 'owned' collectively by their local communities rather than by the professional 'producers' of Education or, indeed, by the state. ... Although Boards and governing bodies existed alongside other means of involving parents in the school, such as PTA's, there was little indication of a more general and vigorous 'partnership' between schools, parents and local community that can be interpreted in terms of a sea of change" (p.22). Power appears

to have been devolved to the school, without any associated increase in the influence of local communities. This trend will become particularly evident in the case study analysis.

Figure 3.5 - Devolved Budgetary Control in England and Wales - The Local Management of Schools (LMS)

Referred to as the Local Management of Schools (LMS), budgetary devolution involved an integrated package including five elements - financial delegation, formula funding, open enrolment, staffing delegation, and performance indicators. This delegation of power from the LEA to the governors and head teacher was seen as making the school more responsive to the needs of pupils, parents and the local community.

Through the board of governors, schools now determine their own budget priorities. LEAs decide on their overall spending for the coming year (subject to fiscal constraints), retain an amount for mandatory and discretionary central services (such as capital spending, central administrative costs, and inspectors), and then allocate the remainder (85% of the total) on the basis of a pre-agreed formula for financial delegation. This formula takes account of the number and age of pupils (80% of the amount allocated) and the needs of individual schools (20%). The same formula applies to all schools, and is based on actual needs rather than past patterns.

Acknowledging the inflexibility of the scheme in England and Wales, a more pragmatic system of budgetary devolution - Devolved School Management (DSM) - was incrementally introduced in Scotland from 1993-96. The initiative involves LEAs

devolving control of over 80% of school budgets to head teachers. Each scheme must conform to limited Scottish Office guidance, avoiding the need for legislation.

Figure 3.6 - Practitioner Perceptions of Devolved Budgeting

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Greater autonomy • Raised financial awareness • Improved ability to plan (although effected by financial stringency and uncertainty) • Greater flexibility to vire between budgets. • More efficient use of available resources • Fairness as a result of an objective funding formula.	• The time demands on senior managers, typically the Head teacher • Lack of LEA assistance The tendency for financial considerations to predominate over educational ones • An element of unfairness related to the particulars of the funding formula • The lack of flexibility available especially at small schools where budgets were similarly limited.

Source: Adapted from Marren and Levacic (1994)

DSM differs from LMS in several key areas. Of particular note is the decision to devolve budgetary powers to head teachers rather than governing bodies/school boards (as has been the case with LMS). This undermines the arguments regarding strengthening local accountability through empowering participants. Indeed, initial analysis suggests that the initiative seems to be aimed more at LEA internal management decentralisation than any New Right goal of "rolling back the state".

Undoubtedly, decisions will be made more locally, but the head teacher is accountable to the centrally based LEA Education Committee, whereas the board is intended to be accountable to its local electorate (the broader parent body). As such, DSM appears to pose less threat to the LEAs' autonomy in Scotland than LMS has done in England and Wales by ensuring that budgetary discretion remains in the hands of a LEA employee answerable to the LEA's Education Department and Committee. Whilst perhaps appearing pedantic, it is also important to note that the actual powers of school boards were eroded by the initiative; their previous role of "approving" spending decisions being reduced to one of "consultation".

Politically, the detail of DSM may in part have reflected a more flexible and sympathetic approach by the then Conservative controlled Scottish Office in an attempt to nurture gains in electoral support achieved in the 1992 General Election. However, its increased flexibility (based on the success of existing voluntary schemes of budgetary devolution) made it a more effective and sympathetic approach to the allocation and subsequent management of resources in each school. It also posed less of a threat to the broader system of Education provision within the LEA boundary. For example, the Scottish scheme allows LEAs to take account of local variables (such as deprivation) in their funding formulae, allowing the LEA to use the funding regime as a means of redistributive positive discrimination. Strathclyde Regional Council (TES(S), 13 March 1992, p.14) claimed that allocating budgets on a regional average cost per pupil as with LMS would have:

- affected schools in isolated areas with small pupil rolls;
- disadvantaged schools in under-occupied areas suffering from falling populations;
- encouraged schools to appoint less experienced teachers to cut costs (a situation already occurring in English primary schools ; and

- harmed schools in deprived areas, where Strathclyde's support for extra teachers and materials raises costs to £200 per pupil higher than the average.

Opponents have raised several concerns about the possibility of conflict between head teachers and board members over controversial spending decisions. Secondly, there are fears that devolved management responsibilities will place too much pressure on head teachers' time. Thirdly, the reduced role of the LEA is seen by some as threatening local autonomy and reflecting a dangerous trend towards centralism (rather than the decentralisation evident on initial examination). Concerns also arise that the expanded role for head teachers will alienate them from other staff. Nonetheless, analysis suggests that the vast majority of head teachers and Education managers would not choose to turn back the clock to the pre-budgetary devolution allocative regime.

Figure 3.7 - The General Principles of DSM

- LEAs and schools should have clearly defined arrangements for the operation of their schemes incorporated in their policy and management structures.
- In formulating and operating schemes LEAs should consult head teachers and staff, as well as boards.
- LEAs should have a single scheme for all their schools - with variations for different categories of schools.
- Within each scheme, financial resources should be allocated to schools in accordance with clear criteria. These criteria must identify and aim to meet the needs of each school while ensuring equitable treatment based on objective assessment.

(Munro, 1992)

Grant Maintained (GM) Schools - Extending Choice

Grant maintained (GM) schools were regarded as the "flagship" Education policy of the New Right. In theory, the development of GM schools deregulates public provision, enhancing the choice available to the individual and thus increasing the market pressures for quality Education in the remaining LEA schools. Schools and consumers are again empowered at the expense of the LEA. The reforms thus facilitated the indirect central government agenda of undermining the seemingly entrenched power of local authorities. Regardless, diversification in provision has gone some way towards addressing post-Fordist consumption demands in England and Wales (Fitz *et al*, 1993).

Figure 3.8 - Obtaining Grant Maintained Status - The Opting Out Process

Legislation allowing governors/board members and parents of all LEA primary and secondary schools to apply to the Secretary of State for GM status was enacted in the Education Reform Act 1988 and the Self-Governing Schools (Scotland) Act 1989. The Acts made provision for the balloting of parents, where a majority decision can elicit opting out of LEA control. If less than 50% of parents vote, a second ballot must be held within 14 days at which point the majority decision wins. There are no provisions for a school to "opt back in". Once a school has opted out it receives its funding through an annual grant from the Secretary of State, with the possibility of special capital grants in particular circumstances. The board of governors/school board becomes the "board of management".

Concerns have been expressed by LEAs and opponents of GM policy as to the incentive to opt out, manifested in the increased level of funding received by GM schools in comparison to their LEA counterparts. Opponents have suggested and warned that levels of grants offered to tempt schools to opt out will not be maintained in the future. However, as Fitz *et al* (1993) state, "freedom from the control of the LEA is only one of the distinguishing features of a GM school. Another is the composition of its governing body which, unlike that of a LEA maintained school (in England in Wales), does not include party political nominees. Its articles of government also provide for powers in relation to admissions, finance and staffing not presently available to a LEA school. A GM school is not only able to petition the Education Secretary directly for a change in character, it can also invest moneys, acquire and dispose of property and enter into contracts with staff and other groups and agencies. Indeed, by virtue of its autonomously incorporated status, a GM school has greater flexibility than a LEA school to deploy staff, manage its local reputation and employ teachers and other staff"(p.9).

Where opting out has occurred in any numbers, marginalisation of the remaining LEA schools is a distinct possibility. Authorities on both sides of the political perspective have developed strategies to come to terms with the developments. In England and Wales, Labour controlled LEAs initially tried to prevent opting out with practices including the refusal to sell central services to opted out schools. On the other hand, many Conservative LEAs tried to encourage mass opt outs, unburdening the LEA of its entire responsibility for school management (Gasson, 1992). The ideological opposition to GM schools has been less salient at a local and national level since the election of a New Labour Government in May 1997. Indeed, proposals to reverse opting out have been dropped as Labour Party policy,

with a "mixed economy" of Education provision seen as sitting comfortably with the broader enabling approach central to authorities' delivery of "Best Value".

Fitz *et al* (1993) draw three conclusions as to the ways which LEAs are affected by opting out. "First, many local authorities find it deeply frustrating that their planning function can be so easily prejudiced by schools wanting to opt out. Second, despite this outcome, and for a mixture of educational and pragmatic reasons, most of them prefer to develop working relations with those of it's schools which become GM. Third, there is no evidence currently to hand which indicates that great financial difficulties arise when one or two secondary schools opt out from the same local authority. Having said that, many LEAs anticipated a time when an enlarged GM school sector would begin seriously to deplete their financial resources, so making it difficult for them to meet their obligations to schools remaining within their control" (p.60).

Despite these concerns, by the mid-1990s the trend for GM status appeared to have reached a plateau. Around 2,000 schools have attained GM status south of the Border, compared to less than a handful in Scotland. Generally speaking, moves to opt out in Scotland have been responses to the threatened closure of schools by the LEAs (as part of school rationalisation programmes), although the Government has made it clear that schools cannot opt out simply to avoid closure. There are several possible reasons for the low level of interest to date amongst Scottish parents. According to a senior official at the Scottish Office (interviewed in 1992), part of the problem relates to the shortage of school boards yet sufficiently organised to initiate the process, combined with the absence of the tradition in Scotland for the active school governance which has built up in England and Wales. In addition, the standard

of Education is *perceived* by the Scottish public to be higher in Scotland[3], with the population traditionally having more respect for the better qualified teaching profession and the ethos of public Education. A further significant factor may be the broad opposition of civil society in Scotland to many of the New Right policies forthcoming from consecutive Conservative Governments (Adler *et al*, 1995). The relationship between civil society in Scotland and both central and local government appears different to that south of the Border. Whether the Scottish situation is based on faith in public Education and/or local government in general or mistrust of Conservative central government may become more apparent as the new Labour Government rolls out its legislative agenda.

A further factor surrounds parent concerns on accountability. Opted out schools appear less accountable for their operation than those within the LEA system. Within the latter there are several levels to which issues can be raised - the school, the governors, the elected members, the LEA, the Chief Education Officer and the MP. Whilst GM school parents can raise issues with the management board and the head teacher, any right of redress outwith those channels depends on the scale of support and the commonality of experience. Furthermore, there is little opportunity for individuals/communities at large to express concern regarding the fragmentation of the LEA system or loss of local autonomy other than through the ballot box. The individual rights of the service consumer are arguably being put ahead of the concerns of local civil society.

Fitz *et al* (1993) indicate that "the opting out process is often initiated by Head teachers anxious about the long term security of their institutions, rather than by

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[3] The reality may be somewhat different, with Scotland on Sunday (December 7, 1997) carrying an article entitled "Scots are bottom of the class". The article pointed to information from the OECD suggesting that Scotland was near the bottom of the league in terms of numeracy, literacy, expenditure on Education as part of GDP and average hours of homework.

groups of parents or governors which have an increased sense of their own empowerment as "consumers" of Education. Certainly, there are few signs that opting out increases consumer or citizen influence in schools. Head teachers, however, are sometimes unable to conceptualise more that a crude cause and effect relationship between extra funding, the quality of pupil learning and the raising of educational standards" (p.73-74).

Governance of Education - School Boards as a Vehicle for Active Citizenship

In England and Wales, the 1980 and 1986 Education Acts, and the Education Reform Act 1988 increased the powers of governing bodies over Education. The School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988 formally introduced similar bodies in Scotland, although powers and responsibilities are not as extensive as those south of the Border. School councils had existed in Scotland prior to the 1988 legislation, but each one represented a group of schools and had a limited range of functions. The Taylor Report (1987) advocated a governing body for each school in England and Wales, with equal representation of LEA, school staff, parents and the local community. The governing body would stand in direct line of authority between LEA and the head teacher. A report by Macbeth *et al* (1980) initiated the development of a similar system in Scotland.

Such moves towards enhanced local accountability through school boards were a reflection of the increased emphasis put on parental involvement in school management. Their development must again be considered as part of the broader reforms, with increased participation seen as empowering parents as citizens and

consumers, enhancing existing representative democracy and managerial accountability.

Figure 3.9 - National Support Frameworks for Boards in Scotland

The Scottish Education Department has a School Boards Support Unit, publishing a termly newsletter for Board members. Nationally, there are two parent representatives on the Scottish Consultative Council on the curriculum which itself consults widely with all the interest groups in education, including parents. The Forum of Scottish Education was established in 1988 at the height of the debate on Education reform. This provides an informal meeting place for all interest groups and meets roughly every six weeks.

Nationally there are three major organisations for parents. The Scottish School Boards Association was established in 1991 and represents 800 schools out of about 2,000 with established Boards. The SSBA is non-political, is funded by a grant from the Scottish Education Department and is increasingly being consulted by the SED, by the teachers unions and by the Scottish Council for Educational Research.

The Scottish Parent/Teachers Council has more than 700 school PTAs in membership and also reports growing interest in its activities. The SPTC Chair was a member of the working party on Devolved School Management.

The third group, the Parent Coalition, is a pressure group which came into being during the campaign against the SED's test proposals for primary children. It has now been disbanded.

(The RISE Report, 1994).

Figure 3.10 - The Powers and Actions Available to Boards

The majority of schools in Scotland currently have their own school board (falling only slightly from the 96% of secondaries/80% of primaries recorded in 1990 - see Table 3.1). Powers range from fulfilling simple advisory roles to deciding to opt out of LEA control. However, school boards do not have control over their school budgets or curriculum, or the ability to employ and dismiss staff. Delegation orders may be used to increase the initially limited powers, but not in the areas detailed above.

Despite a common minimalist position, school boards have six categories of action available to them:

- **rejection** - the refusal to spend time considering an issue;
- **delegation** - passing a task to another group or person; or accepting delegated functions from the LEA;
- **information** - acquiring it, making it accessible, or publicising it;
- **accountability** - rendering account or monitoring activity;
- **advice** - consulting, promoting/advising, or being consulted/advised; and
- **decision-making** - policy making, approving decisions and implementing decisions.

(Macbeth, 1992)

The setting up of boards was seen by the New Right as a necessary precedent to their flagship policy of grant maintained status for schools, with boards ensuring the necessary parental input to counter the distancing from democratic control (however tenuous) in the LEA sector. Boards themselves have a considerable degree of freedom

to decide upon the their emphasis, with such a position allowing the adoption or avoidance of party political objectives depending upon the orientation of board members. Avoidance has been more common in Scotland than it has south of the Border.

According to Macbeth (1990), the creation of school boards was not strongly contested by opponents of the Conservative Government, although there was criticism of their structure (especially their parental voting majorities and the relative virtues of placing parents in an executive rather than consultative role) and their powers (particularly the ability to opt out of LEA control). This in part appears to reflect the general support in principle for citizen empowerment and increased public participation. Enthusiasm over their creation was perhaps further dampened by existing pressures within Scottish Education and the strains caused by economic decline and changing demographic patterns. The traditional high level of autonomy of Scottish teachers also produced initial friction.

According to the Scottish Office (1989a), "the purpose of school boards is to establish much closer links between schools and parents and to give parents a greater say in the running of schools". Moreover, "school boards have been introduced to encourage local communities to co-operate with schools in the education of their children and to provide a means for the expression of parents' interests and views" (the Scottish Office, 1989b). School boards would therefore appear to fill two roles, the first as the voice of schools to the community, the second as the voice of the community when dealing with the school, the LEA, or central government. The nature and strength of the links with spatially manifested communities - school catchments in this instance - mean that the effectiveness of the board and its relationship with sections of the community can result in varying patterns of inter and

intra-locale representation in its dealings with the school and the LEA. The issue of board accountability is discussed later.

Table 3.11 - Key Statistics for Scottish Public School Boards

3.11a Primary and Secondary School Boards and Election Levels 1990 - 1994

Primary Schools	Total No. Schools	% with Board	% held Elections
March 1990	2,373	80.5	47.4
May 1992	2,339	76.5	22.2
May 1994	2,329	74.0	20.5
May 1996	2,317	74.9	N/A
Secondary Schools			
March 1990	428	96.3	70.0
May 1992	410	94.9	31.7
May 1994	406	92.6	32.2
May 1996	402	93.8	N/A

3.11b Statutorily Prescribed Size/Composition of School Boards

	Number of Members			Schools in Each Band		
Roll	Parents	Staff	Co-opted	Primary	Secondary	Special
1-500	4	1	2	2,297	91	152
501-1000	5	2	2	44	205	-
1001-1500	6	2	3	-	99	-
Over 1500	7	3	3	-	11	-

Source: Adapted from the Scottish Office (1995) and figures supplied by the Scottish Office Education Statistics Division in 1998

School boards also provide a window for other outside opinions and expertise via co-option and the particular skills of parent members. For example, efficiency and financial expertise may be incorporated via co-opted members with commercial management backgrounds. Whilst school staff or LEA officers address (and are held accountable for) more complex management decisions, the role of the board is nonetheless important: "there is evidence that schools differ in quality, and that the nature of their provision affects school attainment. If the curricular provision and ethos of a school are affected importantly by decisions and actions taken within the school, then there would seem to be grounds for a school board to assess the decisions taken in the school which contribute to that school's distinctive nature" (Macbeth, 1990, p.38).

Macbeth identifies five themes which characterise school boards in Scotland:

- each school board has substantial facility to decide for itself how it will operate;
- which functions a school board emphasises, who it co-opts, and how it operates depends on its own objectives, as well as those laid down by central government and LEAs;
- much of the variation between schools in Scotland is a result of decisions at school level, many of which are made by school boards;
- the parental role in school boards is particularly strong; and
- the influence school boards have may be more relevant than their.

Several key "power" relationships require particular attention. Within the school (and its catchment) these include internal board relations and those between the board and the head teacher, the board and the broader parent body, the board and the PTA and the head teacher and the broader parent body. These are considered in the

following paragraphs, being linked to the development of a typology of boards. They are also progressed against the backdrop of further externally focused relationships, such as those between the board and LEA (Elected Members and officers), the head teacher and LEA, the broader parent body/local civil society and LEA/central government, the board and central government government and the LEA and central government. These relationships are mapped in figure 3.11.

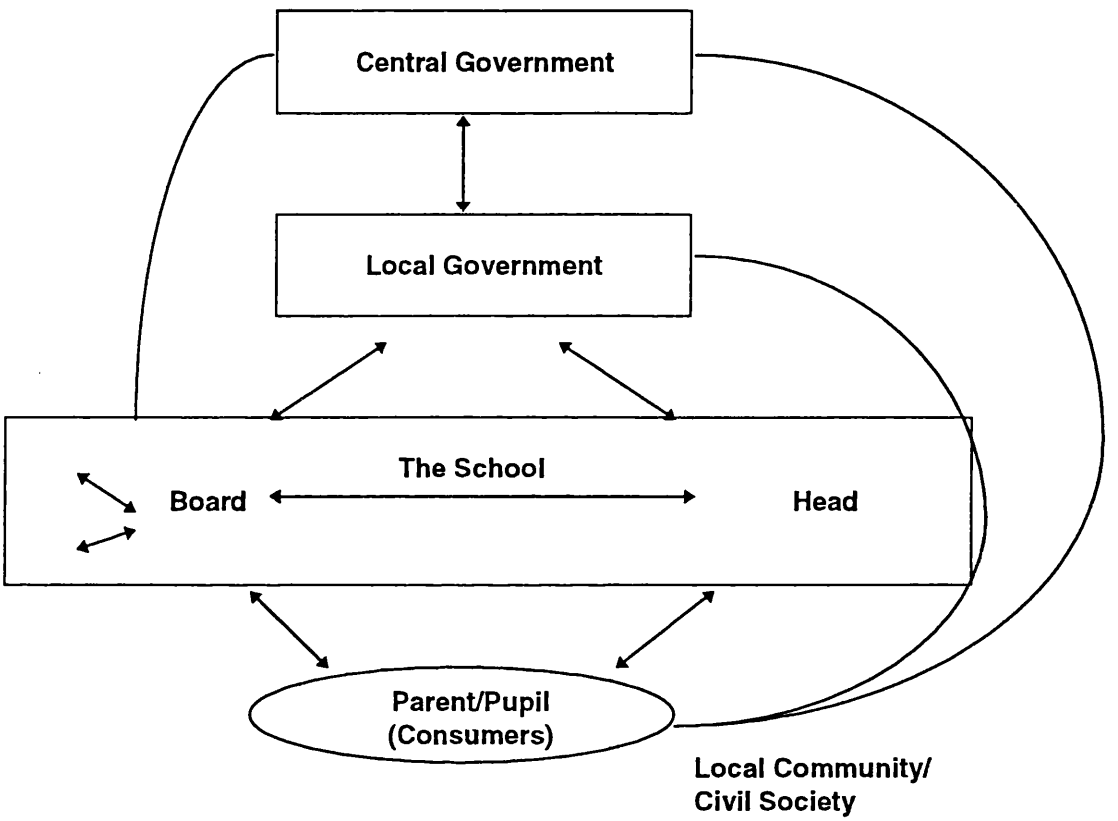
Macbeth (1990) indicates that school boards have three main aims: the educational welfare of the children, the efficient management of the school, and the facilitation of local democracy. However, there may be differences within and between boards as to where emphasis should lie. Biases in training materials provided to boards can have a major effect, especially in the context of prominent parental participation when many parents may have limited committee experience. Adopted priorities amongst the listed aims may have a bearing on who is co-opted, what sub-committees are set up and which functions are given priority. Attention may be easily diverted from the main aims, either deliberately or accidentally. He suggests that board cohesion and objectivity can be challenged by two internally manifested pressure:

- **domination** where the board conforms to the wishes of established interests; and
- **factionalisation** where the board divides into groups on the basis of individual loyalties.

With regard to its relations with other key players, the RISE Report (1994) found that "the weakness of the Scottish school board system is its voluntary nature, with some Heads reported to be determined to avoid having a board (and/or a PTA) and other boards failing from lack of interest amongst parents. Nationally, the acceptance of the parents role in consultative procedures does not prevent some

tensions between the different parents' organisations. Nor does it prevent Ministers disliking parents views when they do not accord with their own" (p.16). This points to the potential for conflict between both the board and the head teacher within the school, and also between the school and the LEA/central government.

Figure 3.11 - Key Relationships in the LEA School Arena



On the former, Raab and Arnott (1995) argue that "boards which were well connected to the outside world tended to adopt a more active role and to be less deferential to the head teacher. By the 'outside world', we mean significant influential groups, organisations or persons in educational, business or political worlds beyond the school. Networks of these connections are useful to a school when they can be mobilised in the pressure politics of relations between the school and the Education

authority or the local community. Our findings suggest that, where a school board, through its lay members, was well connected outside the school, the Head was able to use it as a supportive mechanism in dealing with local and central government officials" (p.21). In saying that, Field (1985) suggests that the quality of leadership provided by the head teacher is perhaps the most significant factor in the effective working of boards, especially when considering policies which may distinguish one school from others. A background of public confidence in teachers in Scotland in general means that the school board becomes a forum in which teachers may enhance their professionalism in the eyes of parents. School boards have a role in fostering this professionalism, thus boosting public confidence and enhancing local accountability.

With regard to conflict between school boards and LEAs, Macbeth (1990) suggests that policies affecting groups of schools are the democratic remit of LEAs and that boards should therefore look inwards for their principal focus. However, the role of the board as a democratic check on LEA activity suggests that conflict could and should arise. The RISE report (1994) points out that "parental opposition to policy proposals is conceded to be effective by some LEAs, if only in a negative sense. Protest at closure and re-organisation plans is widely held to affect policy, particularly at election times. The threat of 'opt out' initiated by parents is also conceded to have an effect on planning and budgetary issues. Some authorities have shelved plans to change the school day or the number of terms in the school year in response to parental objections. Others commented that elected representatives had been responsive to parental lobbying on budget issues. It is clear, however, that parents as Governors are generally in a stronger position as regards consultation than parents as members of PTAs or pressure groups" (p.8). School boards must be

therefore be considered in a different light from parents associations (PA's) or parent-teacher associations (PTA's). However, the activity of such voluntary organisations may influence board operation. PA's or PTA's may act as a means of channelling board decisions to parents, and also as open forums for parents' views. Moreover, both boards and PTA's provide an opportunity for increased parent-teacher partnership.

A complex and dynamic relationship therefore exists between the LEA (officers and elected members), the school (through the head teacher), the board and the broader parent body. The attitude, abilities and actions of each of these players determines the nature of the relationship and the resultant implications for each locale. The extent to which conflict occurs between different players depends on the role adopted by the board, with Macbeth (1990) suggesting four models of school governing bodies:

- an **accountable governing body** which aims to ensure that the school is working along LEA guidelines;
- an **advisory governing body** which acts as a forum for local ideas;
- a **supportive governing body** which supports school staff and trusts in their professionalism;
- a **mediating governing body** which acts as an intermediary between the LEA and the school, looking both inward and outwards.

The strength of the teaching profession in Scotland suggests that supportive governing bodies may be particularly common, although the number of boards and range of backgrounds of members probably results in an abundance of different types of boards whose focus alters over time. The activity of school boards varies depending on the board's position on a spectrum ranging from active and progressive

bodies to minimalist bodies fulfilling only statutory obligations. The latter has been the most common in Scotland to date (Macbeth, 1992), with a broader picture of parent and voter apathy towards school boards. Moreover, there is considerable member apprehension about the prospect of being given enhanced powers, with Government rhetoric about extending parental rights not matched with the desire, even amongst parent activists, to take on new burdens. Within the school, power generally appears to reside with the head teacher.

The relationship between boards and parents is arguably of greatest significance when considering the extent to which the reform has strengthened local accountability. Two important points need be considered about the nature of accountability engendered by school boards (Munn, 1990). Firstly, the exclusion of areas such as the curriculum and assessment from school boards remit "suggests that one of the purposes of boards is to monitor schools' adherence to the centrally devised national curriculum and to monitor performance in national testing and public examinations. In that sense boards are one more accountability mechanism for schools" (p.5). The question is "to whom is *the school* held to account by such monitoring?" The board? Parents as a whole? Central government? Boards would appear to be acting indirectly as central government agents, in addition to being the agents of the community envisaged by the Scottish Office. There is no reason to suggest that such roles need be mutually exclusive. However, the latter is more openly and explicitly communicated than the former.

Secondly, to whom is *the board* accountable for effective fulfilment of its duties and responsibilties? As Munn points out, "the hierarchical nature of the relationship between boards on the one hand and schools and Education authorities on the other is clear. That is, schools and Education authorities are accountable to

boards; boards are not accountable to schools and Education authorities" (p.6). Indeed, it is the LEA, not the board, which is ultimately responsible for the board's actions. Both these points raise questions related to the accountability and role of boards, and emphasise the importance of each board being representative of the broader community. The decline in school board elections (illustrated in Table 3.11) and limited turnout suggest that representation and accountability are likely to be weak. Generally speaking, the voice of parents remains largely unheard, with boards in certain areas tending to be unrepresentative and parents apathetic about elections (Macbeth, 1992). Failure to achieve such representation undermines the accountability of the LEA and school to the broader parent body. As such, power is effectively retained by the LEA, with little collective parental opportunity to influence service planning or delivery.

The findings of Bogdanowicz (1994) in his analysis of the European Union position are of greater concern: "the inter-play of social factors which determines representation, and the absence of other forms of partnership, certainly serve to underpin the mechanisms which usually result in social exclusion. In this situation, parent participation, while assuring schools a supply of *ad hoc* staff at no cost, subverts any democratic form of representation and risks further reinforcing the reproduction of the social order. In practice, the complexity of the structures, the specialised nature of the functions, the methods of election, and the absence of information and training are all factors influencing the sociological aspect of participation" (p.13). In short, he is suggesting that the existence of parent representative bodies across the EU may actually subvert the influence of the broader parent body, a point not lost to Macbeth (1990) in his reference to "cosy clubs" of board members and school staff.

Kogan (1995) suggests that "there is little evidence so far that parents and other clients now have a greater say in the running of schools. Logically, it is difficult to see why it should happen because, in the nature of things, stronger delegation to the school and away from Local Authorities is likely to make professionals at the level of the school stronger rather than weaker. In as much as power will not then pass to Head teachers, it will be sustained jealously by political groups now in the ascendancy within Local Government" (p.58). Brehony (1994) agrees, stating that "in this New Right scenario, governing bodies have little or no role other than to be a part of a general or desired tendency towards decentralisation and the devolution of decision making, since their composition would include not only parents but also business people, politicians and other LEA representatives and teachers" (p.52). He indicates that few signs of effective participatory democracy were to be seen among governors in his case study. He argues that: "viewed from both the Political Science and the participatory democracy perspectives the current situation regarding school governing bodies is untenable. The contradictions between the forms of representation and the purposes of governing bodies are such that, disregarding the tensions between lay governors and the professionals, governing bodies are failing to provide either local accountability or local control" (p.58).

Brigley (1994) agrees, suggesting that the "combination of consumerist empowerment, school self management and central restructuring of what remains principally a national system, locally administered may not be satisfactory to all parents. Consumer choice does not permit the level of participation in policy making which some would like, nor does the parents charter cover all matters on which they may seek redress in education. Parents are citizens with civil, social and political rights. As such, they may wish to hold the Education service publicly accountable,

using their rights to freedom of speech and association, to vote in national and local elections and politically to influence public institutions" (p.66). Boards simply do not appear to be facilitating such opportunities for broad community empowerment.

Brehony (1994) links the argument back to that of community representation and active citizenship rather than consumer sovereignty: "community is, as many have pointed out, a very slippery notion. Within a geographical area such as that from which a school draws its pupils there may be not one but many communities and even aggregations of the populations in which the social ties we recognise as accompanying the term community have ceased to exist. How then can we begin to ensure that communities are represented fairly?" (p.61).

Conclusion

Changes in public Education management have been designed to mirror broader shifts in patterns of production and consumption of public services. Whilst scepticism exists as to the extent to which change has been primarly demand-instigated, growing civil society awareness and expectation have allowed central government to impose a New Right agenda on LEAs. This has altered the traditional tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society, "squeezing LEAs at both ends" and undermining their redistributory ability/discretion within an overall local Education system. Despite this, the balance of power in *the local arena* still seems to lie in the hands of the LEA, although it may have been devolved from the centre to individual schools. Participation has not been enhanced to any significant degree, leaving LEAs with a limited democratic mandate for their activities. Moreover, specific developments have indirectly weakened (rather

than strengthened) the democratic accountability of local authorities to local communities as managerial solutions have been favoured in an attempt to address the evolving demands of service consumers. The attitude, ability and action of each key player (especially head teachers and school board members) becomes increasingly important in determining individual school outcomes outwith a formal system.

The New Right ideology has been the most significant factor affecting the organisation and operation of public Education management. In theory, individual choice, competition and accountability were to be facilitated by an Education system opened up to market pressures, with the individual school again becoming the focus of attention. However, the literature suggests that the appropriateness of the free market to public service provision remains debatable, with accessibility and choice undermined by spatial, economic, social, and psychological factors. In short, social mobility once again appears to determine access to choice and influence, with more affluent parents (from the top and middle of the occupational hierarchy) typically more able to grasp opportunities. As a result, the market has done little to reduce disparities in need or cater for those unable to access the independent sector (traditionally key objectives of public service provision). Parental choice has often hastened closure of schools at the "bottom end" of the market, whilst the tendency for such schools to be located in deprived areas has left many disadvantaged communities "school free". Finally, of fundamental significance, competition to date has failed to achieve the improvements in the quality of education that had been targeted.

To a degree, many of the structural/managerial changes which have taken place have mirrored the decline of Fordist patterns of mass production and consumption and their replacement by more diverse and flexible post-Fordist trends. However, the extent to which the reforms have been led by broader changes in

patterns of consumption remains questionable. Undoubtedly there *was* a LEA monopoly on public Education provision, but it could be argued that there are limitations in the extent to which the service has become more flexible and diverse as a result of the reforms. The centralised national curriculum and national testing emphasise this. Whilst parents can now (in theory) choose the school which they wish their child to attend, the appropriateness of the labels "Fordism" and "post-Fordism" is open to question. However, some flexibility in production has occurred, pointing to Jessop's (1992b) "flawed Fordism" and "flawed post-Fordism" being the appropriate concepts in progression of the analysis.

Martin *et al* (1996) conclude that "although it can be argued that the programme of reforms from the mid 1980's has been designed to strengthen intermediary institutions in support of a civil society, the contradictory pressures which underline the legislation are frustrating its purposes. Schools are expected to enter into competition for consumer choices which confirms mediation and erodes co-operative action" (p.15). A balance between the planned and market perspectives must be reached to address consumer and citizen agendas. The literature points to an increasingly assertive consumerism and the need to reinforce this with support for a similar growth in active citizenship. The RISE report (1994) emphasises the point, suggesting that "if it is desirable that the role of parents in policy making is strengthened at school and local authority level, and if a strong parental voice is desired nationally (and clearly there are a number of organisations and individuals working within the system who believe strongly in these objectives) then a statutory structure may be needed to guarantee consistent and democratic change" (p.31). Whilst attempts to increase parent involvement in Education thus reflect broader demands for citizen participation in the decision-making process, there would appear

to be socio-spatial variations in the ability of parents to become involved. This reflects the socio-economic inequality within and between locales. In addition, the literature suggests that parents who participate in one form appear more able and likely to participate in other ways. The patterns of relative understanding and ability to access opportunity mentioned above will be exacerbated. Within this context, the unrepresentative nature of school boards and absence of a strong democratic mandate suggests that existing mechanisms for developing citizenship are inappropriate in themselves. The issue of parental participation in particular must be regarded in the context of a generally, although not universally, passive public culture. This limits the extent of influence regardless of the adequacy of participative channels. Power remains in the hands of the LEA.

Despite some retention of power, the focus on the individual school and individual choice has undermined local area based policies of positive discrimination. This has been exacerbated by the fiscal pressures placed on local authorities, undermining their overall redistributive capacity. The "drive for excellence" indicated by Bradford (1989) threatens equality of opportunity in the Education system, with parental choice and school closures challenging the traditional links between schools and their catchment communities. A complex and dynamic pattern of inter and intra-locale variations in access, outcomes and influence is produced, resulting in spatial variations in expectation and life chances. These further manifest themselves in the ability of individuals within such locales to express demands, and benefit from the associated outcomes of negotiations with schools, LEAs and central government.

To conclude, inconsistencies exist in the nature of the tri-partite relationship from one area to another. The loss of LEA autonomy and discretion as a result of the New Right agenda (both in Education and broader public and fiscal policy) has

threatened the capacity of local government to redistribute in favour of those benefiting least from the outcomes of central government intervention whilst failing to deliver any coherent and consistent empowerment of civil society. This appears to be partly due to the inadequacy of the local government response, increased centralism/fiscal constraint and the lack of ability and desire of civil society to actively participate in shaping its own future.

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Chapter 4 - Policy and Practice in Strathclyde Region

Considerable attention has been given so far to the nature of the dynamic tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society and the implications of the changes during the 1980s and 1990s on the relative power of each "party". Chapters 1 and 2 outlined the general tenets and expression of the relationship across local government services, whilst Chapter 3 examined the implications of central government policy and growing consumerism for local Education management. Socio-economic, demographic and residential change were seen to be important factors affecting patterns of influence, service consumption and production. To some degree, shifting production patterns appeared to have been developed in response to changing levels of demand, although it remains questionable to what extent this has manifested itself in the supply-side diversification typically associated with post-Fordism. The majority of innovation and organisational change in Education management appeared to be a response to the New Right agenda of increasing choice, competition and accountability. In the local arena, power appears to have remained largely in the hands of the LEA, despite a loss of strategic capacity and an element of fragementation of control.

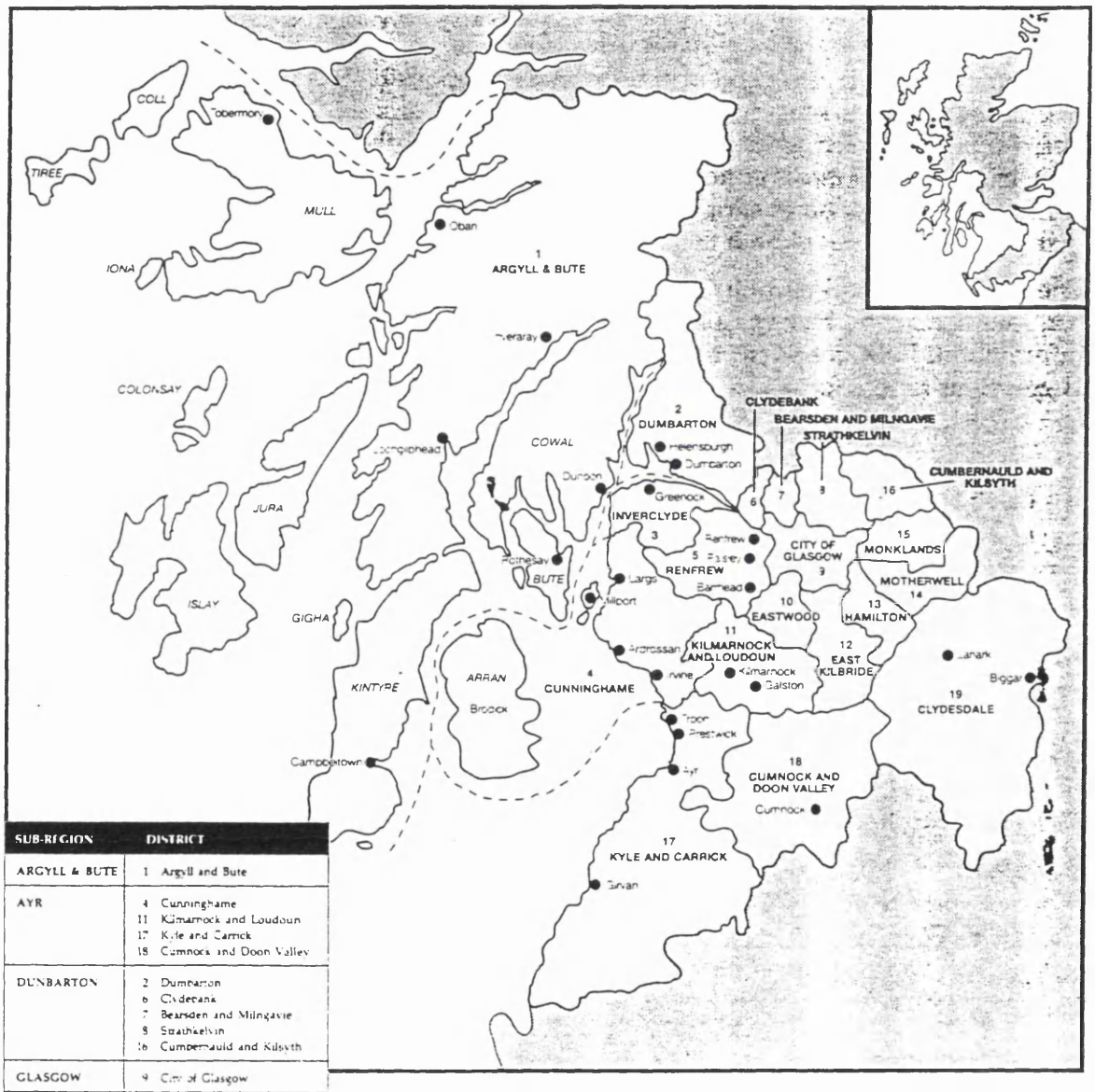
In Chapter 3, reference was also made to Bradford's (1989) observations regarding the shifting political and academic focus away from integrated area-based strategies intended to raise Education standards (acknowledging the socio-economic nature of each locale as an influencer of educational outcome) towards the individual school as a "promoter of excellence". Parental choice legislation has been aimed at empowering service consumers and generating competition between schools. Parents are able to "vote with their feet" in the event of dissatisfaction with their local

establishment. However, the spatial manifestation of groupings of individuals/families of similar socio-economic status (resulting from traditional aptterns of tenure (Hamnett, 1996)) were seen to produce variations in ability to choose within and between different locales (mirroring disparities in broader access to public goods and services, influence, mobility and expectation). Rather than alleviating inequality, parental choice could thus act as a factor maintaining, if not widening, existing socio-economic disparities. Localists consider that the LEA has a significant role to play in managing the local Education system, ensuring that an element of redistribution occurs to alleviate the inequalities between different locales. Whether or not this desire to retain redistributive discretion justifies the apparent reluctance to share power with local communities remains debatable.

Against such a backdrop, this chapter summarises the response by the former Strathclyde Regional Council to the central government and civil society pressure for change in Education, outlining the role of the school as a key element of the Council's broader (cross-service) area-based redistributive framework. It specifically outlines the responsive steps taken by the Regional Council to address central government policy in Education management, providing a context for subsequent field work examination of practitioner and user perceptions of the desirability of the policies, the effectiveness of the adopted responses and the applicability of the theories and arguments discussed in the opening chapters.

Figure 4.1 - Strathclyde Region: Administrative Area

POPULATION	2,306,000	SETTLEMENTS WITH POPULATION	
HOUSEHOLDS	905,300	100-5,000	—166
AREA	13,500 km sq.	5,001-20,000	—51
INHABITED ISLANDS	34	20,001+	—19



SUB-REGION	DISTRICT
ARGYLL & BUTE	1 Argyll and Bute
AYR	4 Cunninghame 11 Kilmarnock and Loudoun 17 Kyle and Carrick 18 Cumnock and Doon Valley
DUNBARTON	2 Dumbarton 6 Clydebank 7 Bearsden and Milngavie 8 Strathkelvin 16 Cumbernauld and Kilsyth
GLASGOW	9 City of Glasgow
LANARK	15 Monklands 14 Motherwell 13 Hamilton 12 East Kilbride 19 Clydesdale
RENFREW	10 Eastwood 5 Renfrew 3 Inverclyde

Changing Education Management in Strathclyde - Factors Informing the LEA Response

Analysis of Education management developments in Strathclyde illustrate a focus of initiatives around individual schools within a broader area-based strategy aimed at reducing inequality, enhancing educational attainment and increasing service accountability. Such developments are based partially the Council's response to the specific Education management initiatives/policies introduced by central government, but also on the overarching ideological and professional priorities of the Council. With regard to the latter, the following related issues must be considered to be significant:

- changing economic, demographic and residential trends demanding area-based responses and a re-allocation of resources;
- the dominant Urban/Statist Left ideological focus (emphasising centrally controlled area-based redistribution and positive discrimination) and specific political priorities of Elected Members on the Administrative Group;
- the professional paradigms of key senior officers/advisors (both policy planners and service practitioners) reflected in integrated strategic planning and service delivery;
- a managerial and political desire to decentralise in an attempt to strengthen accountability and avoid central government and public charges of remoteness; and
- direct and indirect pressure for change (or indeed maintenance of the status quo) from local civil society (users, interest groups, the media, local business) and supporting backbench political pressure.

The Socio-Economic and Demographic Context

Chapter 3 outlined the extent to which macro-level demographic change and economic restructuring impinged significantly (if to differing extents) on each individual locale. This produces local disparities in quality of life and mobility between different areas, placing a range of heterogeneous pressures on the local state and demanding an element of redistribution of resources. Whilst the national framework of resource allocation goes some way towards redressing disparities between local authority areas, addressing more local demands remains a key challenge for local government.

In the former Strathclyde Region, the underlying economic trend has been one of general decline. Between 1979 and 1990, total employment fell by 13.3% to 856,000 (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992b). This masks considerable inter-sector variations. For example, a 9% growth in the proportionally large service sector was offset by a 43% decline in manufacturing during the same period. Primary and construction industries also experienced a decline. The issues of professionalisation and residualisation identified by Hamnett (1996) may be of particular significance. In addition, the large proportion of public housing in Glasgow would be expected to make inter-locale disparities within the city particularly salient. Although resultant unemployment rates vary between the former district council areas (see Appendix 4.2), economic decline had significant implications for all areas of the Region during the 1980s. The extent of deprivation across the region has been ranked by the Council on the basis of an agreed set of criteria.

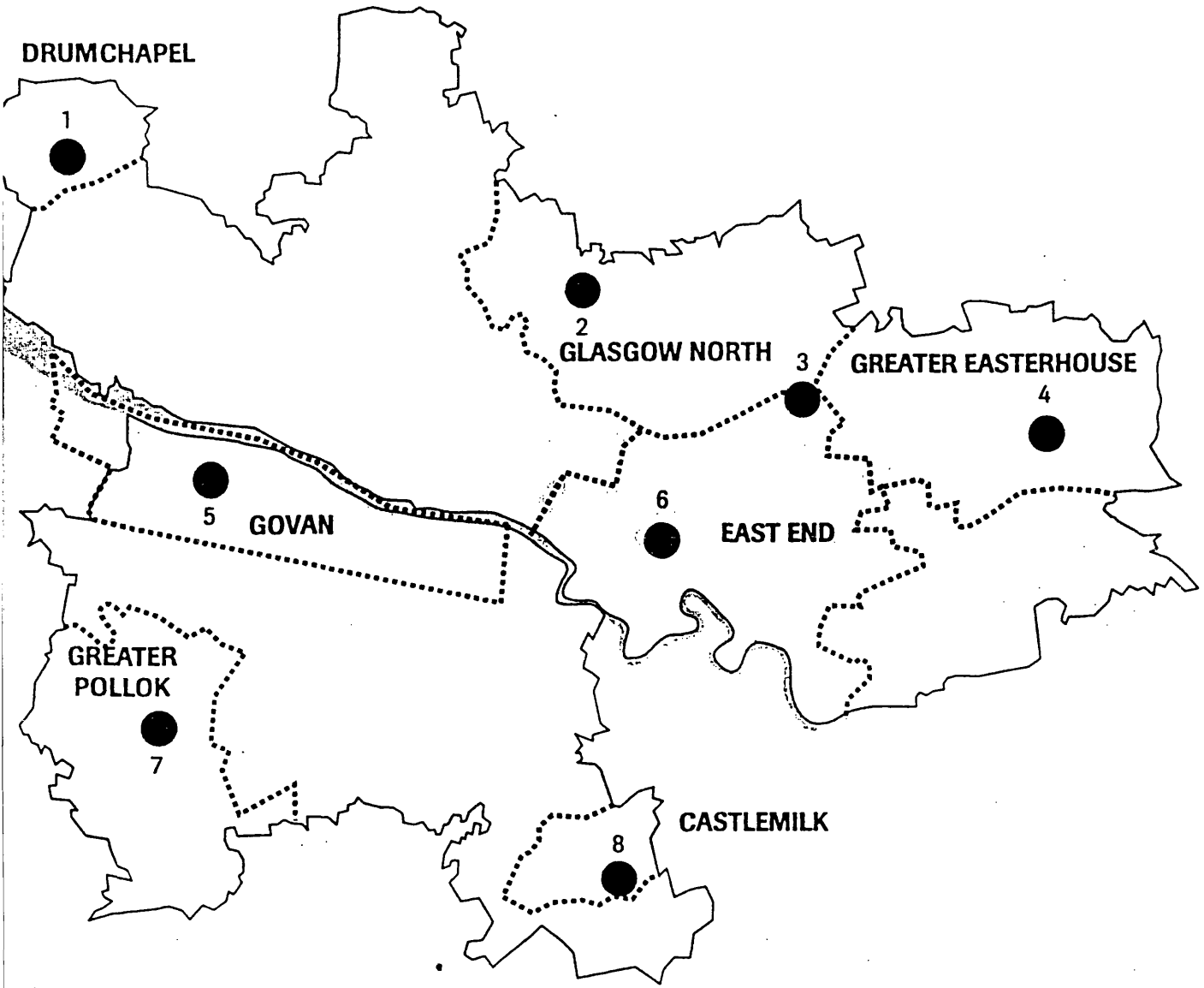
The Glasgow Divisional Area (on which specific the field work undertaken in this study focuses) is ranked poorest against the majority of the criteria. The criteria and Strathclyde-wide/Glasgow figures are outlined in Appendices 4.1 and 4.2. Figure 4.2 highlights the most deprived areas within the city. 277,000 people (42% of the total population) live in areas designated as "deprived. A number of additional factors help build up the picture:

- Glasgow contains over 78% of Scotland's most deprived Enumeration Districts;
- the unemployment rate in the city is the highest in Scotland;
- Glasgow has the second highest rate of households with no earner in the UK (after Manchester);
- 44% of primary school pupils qualify for free school meals; and
- the city has the lowest rate of households with access to a car in the UK (35% versus the 67% average).

Many of the problems faced by Glasgow reflect its relative socio-economic position *vis-a-vis* its immediate environs. The city is surrounded by a ring comprising middle-class dormitory suburbs, two New Towns (Cumbernauld and East Kilbride) and older industrial towns (Coleman and Salt, 1992). Most of the wealthier suburbs have more positive socio-economic profiles than Glasgow itself, but fall outwith the administrative boundaries (and direct tax raising scope) of the city's new unitary authority (Glasgow City Council, 1997a). Moreover, the New Towns are characterised by considerably healthier socio-economic bases than the core city. The strained financial position in Glasgow as a result of its poorer socio-economic profile, associated low tax base, loss of central government grant at Local Government Reorganisation[1] and higher proportion of households demanding social welfare

[1] largely due to changes in the distribution criteria for Revenue Support Grant which worked against the city

Figure 4.2 - Schools Serving the 7 Major Regeneration Alliance Areas



1. Drumchapel High School
2. Springburn Academy
3. Smithycroft Secondary School
4. Lochend Secondary School
5. Govan High School
6. Whitehill Secondary School
7. Bellarmine Secondary School
8. Castlemilk High School

NB Gorbals is also an identified Regeneration Alliance Area but much smaller than the seven major Regeneration Alliance Areas.

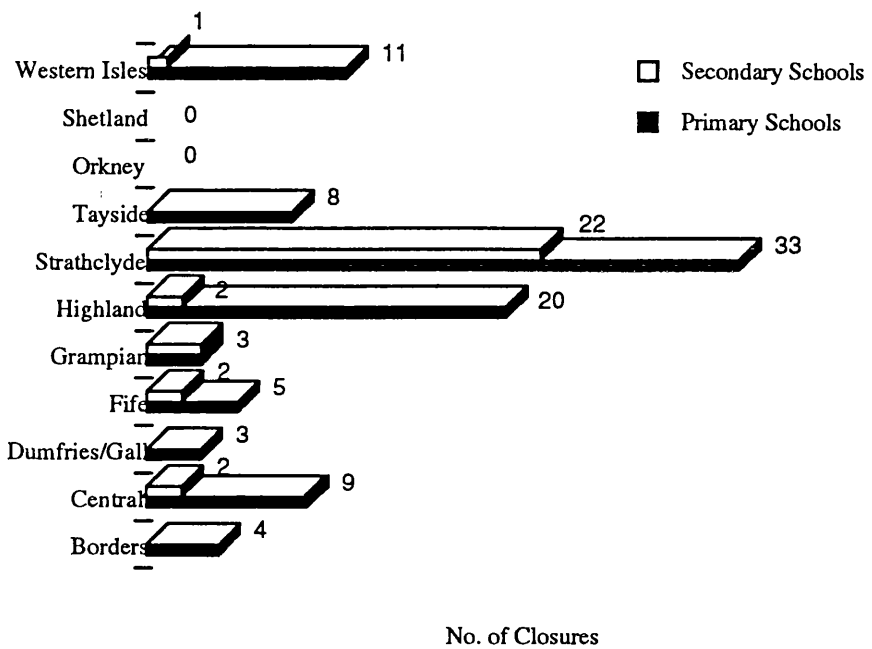
assistance limits the extent of service investment. While direct causal associations with service outputs must be treated with caution, a clear disparity is apparent in Educational attainment levels between the city and its more affluent peripheral suburbs of East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire. This means that nearly twice as many pupils in the the peripheral suburbs are likely to enter higher Education (Scottish Office, 1998c). Disparities in levels of poverty between the areas are more directly apparent in the figures for pupil uptake of free school meals - figures in Glasgow are three times higher than those in East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire (The Observer, 7 December, 1997).

Demographic and economically driven population and residential change further impinge directly on each locale. The imbalance between in-migration and out-migration has seen the Region's population fall by an average of 12,100 per year during the 1980s. The total figure stood at 2,306,000 in 1990 (45.2% of the Scotland total). Population change rather than demography (overall levels of births outnumber deaths) is the more significant factor (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992a). This net loss and accompanying shift in residential patterns produces problems of matching school supply with demand in areas of increasing and declining population. Parental choice further exacerbates these difficulties with many parents in areas of decline opting to send their children to more popular schools elsewhere - either in the city or increasingly in schools in the more affluent suburbs.

The mismatch between capacity and roll (and its effects on educational viability) has thus become a key element in school rationalisation proposals. Details of closure patterns across Scotland are highlighted in Figure 4.3. Strathclyde Regional Council agreed a radical rationalisation programme in the mid to late 1980s, but public and political pressure saw the process softened in many areas. Most publicly,

the proposed closure of Paisley Grammar School in the Renfrewshire Division was rejected following intervention by the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The dynamism of the tri-partite relationship becomes particularly evident. Recent innovative proposals for rationalisation and catchment re-zoning are discussed in the conclusions to the study.

Figure 4.3 - School Closures 1984/85-90/91



Source: Adapted from the Scottish Office (1992) and Strathclyde Regional Council

At the time the study commenced (1991/92) there were 177 secondary schools in Strathclyde with a total role of 136,849 pupils. Secondary school rolls have been falling continuously but not consistently since 1978 (when they stood at 206,274). Whilst in the first 5 years a drop of 8% was recorded, this subsequently accelerated to produce a further fall of 28% from 1983 to 1991. Although a downward trend in secondary school rolls has occurred throughout Strathclyde, there was a substantial variation in the rate of decline at Divisional level. Since 1975, Glasgow has

experienced a 54% fall in numbers compared to 10% in Argyll and Bute. This highlights the significance of residential shifts and the trend of suburbanisation and counter-urbanisation (taking many pupils beyond the city boundary). It also points specifically to the importance of population and residential change in the selected study area.

Local Government Reorganisation in 1996 led to a slowing of the pace of school rationalisation in the mid 1990s, as the former authorities chose to leave decisions on closure to the new authorities. However, the period since has been categorised by proposals for school closures across the 32 unitary authorities. Primary schools have faired particulalrly badly. Although the majority of closures have been prompted by pressures on authorities' revenue budgets, their appears to be a growing awareness of issues of educational viability in some schools (especially those with a low roll versus capacity ratio) and the learning/teaching problems caused by substandard accommodation and facilities (again typically in the lower roll schools in more deprived areas). Glasgow has devised some particularly radical proposals to close 9 of its 38 secondary schools and abandon catchment zoning within the city. The proposals are seen as freeing up resources to invest in the future of schooling in Glasgow. They are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

A Framework for Redistribution - The Social Strategy

The varying implications of economic and population restructuring demanded an integrated strategic response by the Council. The overarching Elected Member and officer focus on integrated strategic planning, redistribution and positive discrimination therefore subsequently manifested itself in the production of an holistic

Social Strategy informing all Regional Council activity. The Strategy had two clearly specified aims (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992a):

- to reduce deprivation/disadvantage and their effects;
- to work with local communities in partnerships within which power and decision making are shared.

Progressing the first Social Strategy aim involved adopting an area based approach to alleviating deprivation, with targeted localities falling into one of three categories determining the scale of activity and funding to be undertaken. These are highlighted in Figure 4.4. Attention for the more deprived areas manifested itself in a number of forms: the establishment of inter-agency forums, co-ordinated applications for sources of external funding (through the EU or Urban Programme), specific Regional Council grants for nominated projects and positive discrimination in the revenue funding of certain key services. Attempts to increase influence and share power appear to have been genuine.

Figure 4.4 - Categories for Funding/Action

Firstly, the Council adopted 88 Areas for Priority Treatment (APT's) coinciding with the worst areas of deprivation identified in the 1981 Census. In almost all the APT's local implementation groups were established (eg. Area Liaison Committees or Area Development Groups), comprising Regional Council Elected Members and officers, community representatives, and in many cases District Council Members and officers. The focus of attention of the established inter-agency groups generally centred on enhancing community development and local service provision, although some adopted a more strategic approach to affecting long term change. The Regional Council recognised these areas as being eligible for Urban Programme funding. *cont./*

From this list of APT's, the Council selected a smaller number of Special Initiative Areas which would be given the highest priority on the basis of their large size and the severity of their socio-economic problems. These were established in Drumchapel, Greater Easterhouse, the East End of Glasgow, Blantyre and North Ayr. Furthermore, Castlemilk in Glasgow and Ferguslie Park in Paisley were identified by the Scottish Office as New Life for Urban Scotland Initiative Areas, with the Regional Council being a full partner. In both these areas the general approach was largely consistent with those of the Special Initiative Areas.

Following Local Government Reorganisation the most deprived areas within the city were redesignated as "regeneration alliance areas". Key partners (including the City Council) work in partnership to tackle identified causes and effects.

Secondly, 113 "Other Areas" were established where the 1981 Census showed significant problems of deprivation, although less severe than those in the APT's. They were not eligible for Urban Programme funding from the Regional Council, although some were recognised by District Councils and the Scottish Office. Their main source of additional funding from the Regional Council was through Local Grants and grants to community councils. Unlike the APT's there was little in the way of a systematic establishment of inter-agency groups.

The Regional Council also agreed a number of other "priority areas". These included the Joint Economic Initiative Areas which formed part of the Council's Economic Strategy, often overlapping with one or more of the three categories outlined above. They tended to focus mostly on economic development issues and did not directly tackle social issues or involve local communities to the same extent as initiatives taken within the Social Strategy.

Education became a particular focus for the Strategy, being identified as "the single most important means of liberating individuals from the cycle of deprivation" (p.25). The Council had limited discretion in resource allocation as a consequence of its statutory commitments across all service areas. As a result, a very substantial proportion of the budget was effectively committed from the outset. Nonetheless, the Council consistently attempted to direct resources towards areas of greatest need. In Education, schools serving APTs received additional teachers and greater fiscal allocations for equipment and supplies.

As a formalisation of its commitment to the role of Education in alleviating deprivation, the Council approved a related statement of strategic objectives for the service. In short, the Council sought to:

- "provide a full range of courses and services;
- enable all individuals to achieve their potential;
- supply suitable premises and resources;
- encourage access to education throughout life;
- foster genuine partnership in education;
- promote equal opportunity in social justice;
- support economic growth and prosperity." (p.37)

These objectives are worth considering more closely. The idea of "enabling all individuals to achieve their potential", "equal opportunity" and "social justice" emphasise the core values of equity and equality of outcome underpinning the Social Strategy and reflecting the ideological focus of the Region's ruling Labour Group. "Fostering genuine partnership" points to the importance of inter-service and inter-agency working and increased influence and participation by service consumers in identifying priorities and processes. Finally, the desire to "support economic growth

and prosperity" implies a recognition of the key role of Education locally and nationally in supporting overall economic wellbeing. In short, the objectives point to the central position of Education in underpinning any multi-service area-based strategy of socio-economic improvement. The Regional Council attempted to respond to the narrower school-focused initiatives of the New Right within this broader context.

Consumer pressure for change was a further factor. The production of service charters. customer care schemes and extensive marketing and publicity material pay testament to the Region's response to growing consumer demands for empowerment. Senior Regional Council officers (interviewed in 1993) suggested that:

"people now feel entitled to complain about the service or to demand that it should accommodate their particular needs. Twenty years ago nobody questioned the nature of the services available. Expectations are continuously growing because those who control the system either nationally or regionally have responded to the initial pressure. Once attitudes have changed, those controlling the system are obliged to come to terms with it".

Moreover, in response the second Social Strategy objective (outlined earlier), attempts were also made to promote more active citizenship through the strengthening of managerial and political accountability. An audit by the School for Advanced Urban Studies (University of Bristol) indicated that the Regional Council had been some way from developing an integrated approach to implementing decentralisation initiatives across its services. Hambleton et al (1990) concluded that the proliferation of piecemeal area initiatives in Strathclyde developed as part of past strategies marginalised the initiatives themselves, causing confusion and stunting progress. They suggested that " a more comprehensive decentralisation approach could help the

Council free the centre to focus more on strategic management as well as strengthen the responsiveness of local decision-making structures" (p.10).

As a result, the Region developed a broad programme of decentralisation aimed at diverting political criticism of remoteness, improving administrative efficiency, reducing bureaucracy and costs and responding to central government and public demands for enhanced accountability. This manifested itself within the Education Department as a clearer definition of the strategic and operational roles of the headquarters and divisional tiers, the devolution of decisions on staff appointments/promotions to school level and (most significantly) the development of an approach to budgetary devolution (Delegated Management of Resources - DMR) which avoided the pitfalls of the statutory scheme in England and Wales. The formal development of school boards was an accompanying factor aimed at further strengthening the accountability of individual schools to service consumers and local communities. Whilst implemented in response to central government legislation, boards built on the school councils formerly in place in parts of the Region.

In summary, decentralised working was effectively intended to put the school and the service back into the hands of each locale (defined in terms of the school catchment). Local empowerment lay at the heart of the proposals. DMR, the devolution of staffing decisions and school boards made the head teacher more directly accountable to local service consumers and indirectly to the broader community within the locale. As a result, the attitude, ability and actions of the head teacher (and indeed other key players in each locale) become particularly significant factors determining the level of local influence in the school decision-making process. At the same time, parental choice would press each school to enhance the educational experience on offer. Ironically, the generated consumer pressures undermined the

strength of many schools through outward placing requests, threatening to leave some locales/communities "school free". This reflects the general trends discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 4.5 - The Social Strategy on Educational Decentralisation

The Social Strategy stated that changing educational needs must be met in full partnership with local communities. This has been attempted by:

- "enhancing the decision making capacity of individual establishments and staff in the field so as to allow the system to be as responsive as possible to local needs;
- empowering employees so as to give substance to any attempts to empower users of the service;
- considering in detail the value of user choice as a mechanism for ensuring responsiveness and community empowerment;
- enhancing the autonomy of service functions within the department;
- developing the strategic role of the authority within a more decentralised and responsive organisational framework" (p.37).

Effective and accountable decentralisation depends upon a three part strategy within Education. "Firstly, it is necessary to lay down the framework of policy within which schools and other educational establishments must operate. Secondly, local staff must be empowered in such a way as to allow them to be responsive to local needs and preferences. Finally, efforts are required to empower the users of the service (partly through school boards) so that their needs and preferences will be more consciously felt and will come to be more effectively articulated and responded to" (p.39).

(Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992a).

Responding to Central Government Education Management Initiatives

Chapters 2 and 3 outlined the New Right thinking behind initiatives such as parental choice, budgetary devolution, grant maintained status and school boards. Considerable attention was given to perceptions of the suitability and success of these from public choice, localist and communitarianist perspectives. It is not intended to revisit these arguments at this stage. Rather, this section briefly outlines the manifestations of these initiatives on the schools/populations with Strathclyde Region, allowing more detailed analysis and discussion in the subsequent field work chapters and conclusion. Additional attention has been paid to DMR in light of its technical nature and the uniqueness of the Strathclyde scheme.

Attainment

The Education management initiatives imposed by the New Right were partly aimed at increasing service quality and associated attainment levels. Whilst no causal relationships can be identified, it is significant to note that the 1980s and early 1990s saw a continuous improvement in overall attainment levels across Strathclyde. For example, the number of 4th Year pupils attaining 5 or more "O"/Standard Grade passes increased from 26.9% (1983) through 29.4% (1987) to 34.6% (1991). Similarly, the number of 5th Year pupils attaining 3 or more Higher passes increased from 13.6% to 15% over the same period. At the same time, staying on rates increased from 52.4% to 74.2% (4th Year to 5th Year) and from 36.8% to 46.4% (5th Year to 6th Year). Finally, from 1986 to 1990, the number of pupils entering Further/Higher Education and permanent employment increased from 23.0% to 29.7%

and from18.0% to 22.7% respectively (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992b). It is worth remembering that the period of analysis saw substantial changes in teaching methods and a number of developments in the structure of the curriculum. In short, it is unlikely that improvements were predominantly the result of improved service "quality" resulting from increased competition, choice and accountability.

Parental Choice

In line with Scottish legislation, parents of children have been able to make a placing request for their child to a school outwith the catchment area within which they live. The total number of requests has increased steadily throughout the 1980s rising from 4,658 in 1981/82 to 12,783 in 1992/93. Primary school placements in particular have increased substantially, indicating that analysis of source primary school as an indicator of secondary placing request levels may be misleading. Around 90% of all requests are approved, with over-subscription being the predominant factor in refusals. As outlined in Chapter 3, the extent of this over-subscription appeared to produce a plateau of accepted requests in secondary schools by the early 1990s. Table 4.1 details placing request applications.

Table 4.1 - School Placing Requests in Strathclyde Region

Placing Requests	**Primary Schools**			**Secondary Schools**		
	81/82	87/88	92/93	81/82	87/88	92/93
No Received	2,540	7,743	8,122	2,118	3,816	4,661
% Approved	95	89	90	92	91	87

Source: Adapted from Strathclyde Regional Council (1992b)

Grant-Maintained Status

At the commencement of the field work, there had been no applications for grant maintained status received from schools within Strathclyde Region. This subsequently altered in 1994, when a handfull of schools applied to opt out in an attempt to delay closure proposed as part of the Council's rationalisation scheme. Such applications were rejected by the Secretary of State for Scotland, although on all but one occasion closure was delayed until after the Reorganisation of Local Government in 1996.

Delegated Management of Resources (DMR)

DMR strengthens managerial accountability by empowering individual schools, whilst the redistibutive capacity of the LEA is retained through the specifics of the DMR funding formula (which allocates additional resources to schools in deprived areas). Empowerment was designed to facilitate a flexible approach by the schools in their dealings with service consumers and the local community. In theory, each school included in the scheme has greater autonomy in its decision making, and hence local accountability is increased. DMR was intended "to maximise the potential benefits of decentralising control while minimising the dangers inherent in the mechanistic approach being adopted south of the Border. Schools, colleges and other educational establishments should be able to enjoy a very high level of control over their own resources while still benefiting from the services of a very large local authority" (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1991).

Figure 4.6 - The Principal Characteristics of DMR

- "The total budget devolved to each establishment will be the aggregate of separate amounts attributable to particular expenditure heads.
- The amount delegated under each head will be determined by formulae which will be applied uniformly to all establishments of the same type (.e.g secondary schools), but which will not necessarily be derived solely from pupil numbers. Thus, an additional weighting will be given in respect of pupils from areas of deprivation. In certain cases, the formula will be independent of pupil numbers and related solely to actual costs.
- For each devolved area of expenditure, a limit of discretion is determined. Thus for most areas, a minimum standard will be stated and in some cases the maximum will also be given".

(Strathclyde Regional Council, 1990, p.2).

Opponents of the Strathclyde scheme had initially expressed fears that DMR could create problems similar to those being experienced in England and Wales under LMS. However, the Strathclyde scheme was designed to be more flexible than its counterpart south of the Border. Although there is variation in the detail of Strathclyde's scheme from the LMS, the initiatives share the same basic concept of devolving the maximum practical level of control over finances to the individual school. Whilst each school is allocated a budget which will cover most major items of expenditure, the authority continues to determine broad educational objectives and sets guidelines governing areas such as minimum staffing standards. However, the head teacher of each school has considerable discretion as to how the school's budget

is spent. Behind the scheme is the concept that schools will have more incentive to seek efficiency and economy in the use of their resources when they are able to apply any benefits to the improvement of their own services.

DMR did not specify that any pre-determined proportion of total expenditure would be devolved to the local school. In addition, no *single* formula was applied to determine the school's total budget. The Council considered it impractical to devolve all aspects of expenditure to the local level. The administrative costs of divisional offices and headquarters, expenditure on matters such as bursaries and grants and spending on a range of specialist areas (such as the Educational Resource Service, the Psychological Service, etc.) was retained centrally to allow greater strategic control.

Figure 4.7 - Specific Areas Delegated To The Local Level Under DMR

- **Teaching costs** - accounting for more than 60% of school based expenditure.
- **Non teaching staff costs** - e.g. for example, clerical assistants, auxiliaries and technicians.
- **Property costs** - rates (including water rates), purchase and repair of furniture and fittings, energy costs and related budgets to cover minor maintenance and improvements.
- **Supplies and services** - schools previously received a per capita allowance, but in the case of DMR an enhanced allocation was given, with schools' entitlement to receive centrally purchased supplies being reduced correspondingly.
- **Administration costs** - e.g. printing, stationery, postages, and telephone charges.

School Boards

Table 4.2 details the number of school boards in each Education Division of the former Regional Council, highlighting the change in these between 1989 and 1994. The figures refer solely to the position in secondary schools. Whilst the secondary sector had the highest proportion of boards, overall primary and special school trends have mirrored the decline outlined in the table. The compositions of established boards reflect those prescribed in the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1989 (as outlined in Table 3.1). Over the period, there appears to have been a marginal reduction in the number of boards. This reflects the national trend highlighted in the previous chapter.

Table 4.2 - Schools and School Boards by Education Division (1989-94)

	Number of Schools		**% with Boards**	
Division	1989	**1994**	1989	**1994**
Argyll & Bute	93	**89**	100.0	**100.0**
Ayr	31	**29**	100.0	**89.7**
Dunbarton	25	**24**	100.0	**91.7**
Glasgow	51	**43**	94.0	**88.4**
Lanark	38	**37**	100.0	**97.3**
Renfrew	32	**29**	100.0	**100.0**

Source: Adapted from the Scottish Office (1991 and 1995)

Strathclyde Region established a School Boards Support Unit to promote the successful operation of boards and ensure that sufficient support was given to

members and headteachers in the form of training and advice to allow each board to fulfil its duties[2]. Led by a Senior Education Officer, the Unit produced a regular newsletter for board members to supplement the available training. It played a further key role in supporting school board elections and by-elections, dedicating a significant proportion of its time to promoting the activity of boards to the broader parent body.

Conclusion

The specific nature of the dynamic tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society to some degree influences the nature of all state activity. In the former Strathcyde Region, the Social Strategy embraced an all-encompassing area-based approach to reducing inequality, empowering communities and decentralising decision-making and service delivery. This was developed in response to the challenges resulting from macro-level economic restructuring and associated residential and population change. Civil society pressure for improved access to public goods and greater accountability combined with demands for enhanced levels and quality of service to influence the Regional Council's response. The resultant area-based approach attempted to balance the needs of individual service consumers with those of the broader communities within which day to day patterns of service consumption occur. In addition, the Region's approach to Education management was also moulded heavily by the specific initiatives introduced by central government during the 1980s and early 1990s. The parental choice legislation in particular exacerbated the problems resulting from economic, population and residential restructuring, undermining the area-based

[2] information forthcoming from interviews with senior Regional Council officials

approach and threatening the continued viability of some schools in more deprived areas. However, adoption of initiatives such as DMR and the establishment of a school boards support framework demonstrated the extent to which the Regional Council was prepared to be innovative in its response to the centrally imposed challenges.

Based on initial consideration of the former Regional Council's response, questions remain as to which player in the tri-partite relationship was the main driver of change in the management of public Education. The New Right agenda appears to have had the most far reaching implications. Centrally imposed initiatives such as parental choice, school boards and budgetary devolution have most significantly altered the operational structure of the service and enhanced managerial accountability. Despite impingeing upon LEA service production to some extent, they appear to have had negligible success on encouraging alternative provision in such a manner as to produce the competition and choice envisaged by the New Right. Whilst consumer demands themselves do not appear to have been overly significant factors instigating change, subsequent post-legislative patterns of consumption (as expressed through parental choice) have had knock-on effects on the overall system of Education and the viability of some individual schools. As a result, the adoption of post-Fordist consumption patterns appears to have demanded further change in traditional Fordist arrangements for the production of public Education.

Broader citizen generated pressure for change also appears to have been significant. Civil society and central government charges of remoteness and bureaucracy undoubtedly "encouraged" the Regional Council to examine more decentralised working across all services, including Education. Moreover, the adoption of an over-arching Social Strategy was a strategically planned redistributive

response to the outcomes in particular locales of broader economic and population restructuring. In the local arena, power remains predominantly in the hands of the LEA, although local civil society influence has increased as a result of central and local government policy.

Initial investigation suggests that the nature of Education management within Strathclyde Region was predominantly determined by the adopted approach of the Council in response to local community need, being subsequently (and significantly) shaped by the imposed initiatives of the New Right and the associated growth of individualist consumerism. To some degree therefore, public choice theory undermined the localist stance of the Council in its attempts to address the demands of its populations. Whilst an element of a communitarianist approach may have been fostered by increased participation and inter-agency/sector working, New Right initiatives and the related consumerist agenda combined with continuing population and residential trends to frustrate its successful implementation. As a result, the redistributive activity of the Council has had limited impact on reducing inter and intra-locale socio-economic disparities, maintaining spatially manifested inequalities in access to services, life chances and mobility.

Based on primary and more detailed secondary data the field work detailed in the following chapters investigates the nature of the highlighted phenomena in selected locales within the Glasgow Division of the former Regional Council. Chapter 5 summarises the methodology adopted, defining the rationale for the field work and the concepts of locale and community as used in the study. Further secondary data is used to justify the selection of particular locales for detailed examination. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 go on to highlight the perceptions of key players in public Education in each

study locale, relating specific findings back to the literarary sourced arguments highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3.

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Chapter 5 - The Research Study and Methodology

So far, we have seen from the literature that a dynamic tri-partite relationship exists between central government, local government and civil society, shaped by their ongoing interaction and differing responses to macro-level patterns of socio-economic, ideological and technological change. As outlined in the opening chapter, this study focuses on analysis of changes in the nature of this tri-partite relationship during the 1980s and early 1990s within the context of broader socio-economic and ideological dynamism. More specifically, it explores the extent to which these broader factors (predominantly the purported move from Fordism to post-Fordism and the New Right ideology of central government in the 1980s and early 1990s) interact with local circumstances to produce complex spatially-manifested patterns of access, power, expectation and opportunity effecting the life chances of individuals within and between different locales.

The selected case study focuses on the implications of changes in Education Management in the Glasgow Division of the former Strathclyde Regional Council, with findings subsequently abstracted and applied to the broader context of public service production and consumption. The aim is to assess the extent to and manner in which the phenomena outlined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 manifest themselves on the ground, thus impinging on particular locales and the overall socio-political geography of the city. This broadly involves investigation of:

- changing patterns of service production and consumption within the city;
- the extent and implications of growing consumerism in the Education "market"; and

- the nature and perceived success of steps taken to enhance democratic and managerial accountability.

In addition to detailing the specific research questions to be addressed, this chapter justifies the focus of the work and explains the rationale behind the case study/sample selection and the methodology adopted. It goes on to define "locale" as a scale for analysis and justifies adoption of those particular locales selected for the case study following analysis of primary and secondary data. Finally, it outlines the problems encountered in undertaking the research.

The Researcher's Experience and Perspective

Having been employed in a research and policy development role in Scottish local government throughout the period of the study[1], I have been in the fortunate position to glean a substantial amount of first hand knowledge of the issues on which the research focuses. My academic perspective has been substantially supplemented by my practitioner experience on the changing nature of the tri-partite relationship and the factors impinging on the design and subsequent implementation of initiatives aimed at increasing democratic and managerial accountability. It has also provided me with an essential contextual backdrop to the general and specific issues being considered in the research. Additionally, I have first hand knowledge of the extent to which the bureaucratic nature of decision-making processes and the attitudes, abilities and actions

[1] Including 2 years with a Unitary Authority responsible for Education prior to my appointment to a senior post at the Accounts Commission in April 1998

of key players can determine the shape and success of particular schemes/projects within local government.

My experience and position have also proved extremely useful in attaining access to appropriate senior staff and Elected Members and subsequently convincing key players in the selected study sample of the validity and value of the research being undertaken. I have worked hard at developing an extensive network of contacts[2] across local government and have regular formal involvement[3] with COSLA and the Scottish Office (in key areas relating to the tri-partite relationship and service quality) as part of my ongoing responsibilities. These contacts have proved invaluable in sourcing qualitative and quantitative information for analysis and informing the shape and focus of the research. I firmly believe that my perceived credibility and first hand experience (as a result of my position) were of substantial assistance in progressing the design and undertaking of the study.

Personal position and experience might have proved to be a disadvantage on a small number of occasions. On issues such as decentralisation, the working of Elected Members and Local Government Reorganisation I was often as aware of the current position and thinking behind the "initiatives" as those practitioners being interviewed. As a result, I had to be careful not to lead responses to questions (especially as this could not have been done consistently as a result of the use of research assistants). The structured nature of interviews undertaken helped to ensure that this did not occur. This was combined with a positive effort on my part not to lead the interviewees. There were occasions where additional contextual information proved useful in

[2] Scottish Co-ordinator of the inter-authority Policy and Performance Review Network
[3] Nominated Officer contact for the Best Value Regime (including elements on Sound Strategic Management, Accountability and Customer/Citizen Focus) and Quality Initiatives

developing some of less adequate/more ambiguous comments made by those being interviewed.

A further difficulty resulting from my experience related a small degree of preconceived scepticism held regarding public interest in participation, and the resultant effectiveness of both decentralisation and the functioning of interest groups. In addition, there was an initial tendency to be somewhat defensive about the perceived shortcomings of local government in terms of its ability to deliver accountable governance and quality services, apparent in adverse comment from central government and local civil society (through public contact, the media, community council liaison, local business groups, etc.). An objective assessment (assisted by the literature) of the role and dominant philosophy of central government, perceived benefits of participative democracy and the current barriers to its effective development had to be undertaken early on to counter much of this scepticism. This exercise proved to be of subsequent benefit in the research and work environment. It is of note that some of the preconceptions have been confirmed (e.g. the agenda of central government and the inadequacy of vehicles for participation in light of civil society interest in participation) by analysis of the literature and the progressing of the research. These become apparent in the final conclusions.

Figure 5.1- Summary of Key Research Questions[4]

Socio-Political and Education Management Aspects

- What are the main factors driving change in public service production and consumption? Which appear to be the primary factors?
- Has post-Fordist production and consumption actually occurred? Is there sufficient choice to generate market pressures?
- What are the key factors determining consumption? How has it manifested itself locally?
- Is there an apparent relationship between mobility and participation?
- Do individual consumers expressing choice typically become involved in other forms of active participation?
- Has democratic *and* managerial accountability been enhanced? Is the customer *and* citizen agenda being addressed?
- Where and how have the main shifts in power taken place?
- Who are the key players in the local arena? How do they facilitate/gatekeep change?
- Does the relationship between local education authorities, schools and communities mirror the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society?
- Is the redistributive role of local government being undermined by decentralisation of control in Education?
- What do the findings imply about the applicability of the theories of local government discussed in Chapter 2?

[4] Note that the information outlined in Figure 5.1 mirrors that included in Figure 1.2

The Research Questions and Forthcoming Analysis - *What* is Being Examined?

The research has two broad areas of focus: the nature of change and its implications for the tri-partite relationship; and the effects of such changes on the socio-political geography of the city. Whilst these are far from mutually exclusive, the specific research questions and subsequent analysis were structured with this distinction in mind. Following description of the fieldwork findings in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, Chapter 9 outlines the conclusions drawn to the socio-political and Education Management concepts and issues discussed in the opening chapters. Chapter 10 goes on to focus on the spatial implications of the research findings in terms of locale and the overall geography of the city. The final chapter brings the findings together, drawing conclusions related to the overall study aims (as outlined in the opening paragraph of this chapter). The research questions are laid out to reflect this staged analysis; the socio-political and Education Management questions appear below, whilst the "geography of the city" questions are dealt with later in the chapter following an explanation of the scale of enquiry and the geographical terminology adopted.

The following sub-sections outline the initial conclusions *drawn by the researcher* from consideration of the literature and secondary analysis and indicate how each conclusion will be tested as part of the case study analysis. The information is briefly summarised under each of the research question headings.

What are the main factors driving change in public service production and consumption? Which appear to be the primary factors?

Analysis of the literature suggests that changing patterns of public service production have been a political and managerial response at the local level to the growing awareness and expectations of civil society and the imposed pressure for change by the New Right. The suggested adoption of a form of supply-side (post-Fordist) diversification and decentralisation have been an attempt by local authorities to address calls for enhanced democratic and political accountability and improved service quality. The literature suggests that the New Right agenda has been the primary driver of change, although a more sophisticated public appears more able to express consumerist preferences within the subsequently created market. In an attempt to gauge the primary factors driving change in the local arena, the case study examines practitioner and consumer perceptions of the nature and drivers of change and the desire of parents for increased choice of Educational "experiences".

Has post-Fordist production and consumption actually occurred? Is there sufficient choice to generate market pressures?

The literature suggests that post-Fordist patterns of production in the public sector vary between services, but that overall such patterns have been limited. Only grant maintained schools provide a plausible alternative to local authority provision of public Education (and in Scotland there are only two grant maintained schools). However, the advent and subsequent growth of parental choice suggests that an

element of post-Fordist consumption is occurring. The case study examines secondary data[5] to assess the extent and nature of these changing patterns of production and consumption and samples practitioner and consumer perceptions of the reasons behind choices expressed. It also examines the existence of a market of schools and the extent to which the Regional Council's decentralisation initiatives in Education have proved a factor in increasing the range of educational experiences available.

What are the key factors determining consumption? How do they manifest themselves locally?

Previous research quoted in Chapter 3 (West and Varlaam, 1991; David *et al,* 1994) points to a number of factors being consistently perceived to be fundamental to parents' decisions to express choice (either within or outwith the LEA sector). These include geographical factors, attainment levels and perceptions of variables such as discipline, school ethos and teaching standards. There are also strong suggestions that the ability to choose is affected by socio-economic factors, producing inter-locale and income/occupation based disparities in patterns of consumption. The case study tests these suggestions through examination of secondary data on consumption patterns and the perceptions of practitioners and consumers as to the factors "pushing", "pulling" and restricting choice within the city.

[5] Predominantly placing request data made available by the Scottish Office and Strathclyde Region

Is there an apparent relationship between mobility and participation?

As outlined above, much of the literature argues that choice, participation and influence are restricted by socio-economic factors impinging on social mobility and life chances. The study examines the extent to which this is apparent within the city, drawing conclusions on the extent to which certain individuals and groups are less able to access available opportunities to improve their life chances.

Do individual consumers expressing choice typically become involved in other forms of active participation?

Evidence from the literature suggests that those individuals who typically express consumerist choice may be more capable and likely to actively participate in other forms. The case study examines the extent to which those parents who make choices are more likely to interact with the school and the board, contact the head teacher, have firm opinions on key issues, etc. than the broader parent body in each of the study schools. Practitioner perceptions of the phenomenon are also assessed, with conclusions abstracted as a result.

Has democratic *and* managerial accountability been enhanced? Is the customer *and* citizen agenda being addressed?

Distinctions have been made in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 between democratic and managerial accountability and the extent to which different initiatives are aimed at enhancing each of them. Further distinctions are made in the literature between the concepts of consumerism and active citizenship. The case study examines the extent to which the initiatives/processes introduced by the former Strathclyde Regional Council are aimed at (and are perceived to have succeeded in) strengthening each form of accountability and whether they have been predominantly targeted at consumerist preferences and/or attempts to generate a more active form of participative citizenship. Conclusions are drawn from examination of each initiative (and practitioner perception of their objectives and success) and primary and secondary data on consumption and participation.

Where and how have the main shifts in power taken place?

The literature suggests that changes in the tri-partite relationship have altered the balance of power between each party, with local government being "squeezed at both ends" (Midwinter, 1984; Stoker, 1989; Walsh, 1989). Whilst indicating that local authority autonomy has been diminished as a result of the central government agenda, the literature also points to limits in the extent to which power has been shared with communities in the local arena. Individual consumer empowerment does not appear to have been matched with an increase in the opportunities for local communities to

influence decision-making and service outcomes (Bogdanowicz, 1994). Where this has occurred, it appears to have manifested itself in managerial decentralisation to the head teacher and the limited sharing of power with school governing bodies (Deem *et al*, 1995). Chapters 3 and 4 indicated limitations in the number of boards in Strathclyde (and across Scotland) and their democratic mandate.

Through examination of developments in the former Strathclyde Region and their implications for the school/parent relationship, the study assesses where and how consumers and citizens have been empowered by both central and local government in the local Education arena. It also assesses the implications of any such empowerment on the ongoing autonomy of local government.

Who are the key players in the local arena? How do they facilitate/gatekeep change?

The nature and application of any initiative is dependent on the attitude, ability and actions of those individuals responsible for designing and progressing it. The literature points to the extent to which key players are in a position to facilitate/gatekeep influence and change. In public service provision this may manifest itself in the shape of each initiative and the extent to which it subsequently meets its intended objectives. The case study gives broad consideration as to who the key players are in the local arena, considering specifically the role of head teachers and school boards[6] as facilitators and gatekeepers of influence and/or change. It examines the extent to which the attitudes, abilities and actions of these players impinge on the

[6] School boards (rather than PTAs) have been selected because their specific rights and responsibilities are established by statute. PTAs have no such formal status, typically concentrating their efforts on social events and fundraising.

objectives of processes aimed at empowerment, strengthened accountability, participation and service improvement.

Does the relationship between local education authorities, schools and communities mirror the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society?

Substantial attention has been given to the dynamic tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. The literature points to the ability of each to significantly impinge on the power and influence of others and the extent to which the relative position of local government has been undermined during the 1980s and early 1990s. The case study is progressed within this context, drawing broad conclusions as to whether or not the relationship between the LEA, the school (expressing itself through the head teacher and the board) and both parents and the broader local community mirrors this relationship (and impinges upon it). The study more specifically samples the attitude of each "player" (LEA, head teacher, board members and parents) to the others and investigates the factors which determine whether this relationship alters significantly between different schools/locales.

Is the redistributive role of local government being undermined by decentralisation of control in Education?

The literature suggests that centralisation of power (to central government) and decentralisation of control (to schools and governing bodies) is emasculating the

traditional autonomy and redistributive role of local government. In addition, broader fiscal pressure, revenue budget capping and an increase in "ringfencing" of resources is undermining redistributive discretion, threatening local autonomy and accountability. The study draws conclusions on the extent to which decentralisation in Education appears to be eroding the redistributive capacity of local authorities by examining competition between schools and perceptions as to the weakening of an overall "system" of Education as a result of recent changes in Education Management. These are subsequently linked to the points regarding centralisation of power and increased regulation discussed in the literature.

What do the findings imply about the applicability of the theories of local government discussed in Chapter 2?

The review of the literature points to the New Right "public choice" agenda challenging the autonomy inherent in the localist perception of local government (expressed in the notion of community governance by Clarke and Stewart, 1992; and Stewart, 1995). It goes on to suggest that the concept of "communitarianism" has been developed in response to the perceived excesses of government (both central and local) and the individualistic consumerist agenda. These are seen as posing a threat to the notions of community cohesion and empowerment. The case study examines practitioner and consumer perceptions of the need and desire for changes in Education management and the extent to which they have impinged on local authorities and individuals/ communities. Based on the findings and the literature, conclusions are drawn as to the ongoing relevance of the thinking behind each theory of local

government and the extent to which each is likely to inform the future role of local authorities as governors and providers of public services.

Justification For Design And Data Collection Techniques - *How* will the Topic be Examined?

Justification for the selection of particular methods is given in the introductory comments to each field work chapter. Specific techniques comprised extensive analysis of qualitative and quantitative secondary sources; semi-structured interviews with several Scottish Office and Regional Council officials, head teachers and school board members; and an extensive sample by questionnaire of parents in each of the study schools. The methods adopted were partly based on the practicalities of progressing the study within the enforced constraints placed on the researcher. These included the requirement to cover upwards of 20 head teacher interviews within school hours over a given period, the willingness of schools to participate in all three phases of the fieldwork and the preparations of school board members and parents to adequately complete and return questionnaires. These issues were addressed by using research assistants to help undertake the intensive aspects of the fieldwork and by acquiring administrative support from within the work place. The agreement to an element of flexible working hours by my employers during the detailed fieldwork stages also proved invaluable.

Figure 5.2 - Stages of the Research and Justification for the Adopted Techniques

Who/What?	How?	Why?
Reviews of the literature on central/local government relations and developments in Education management. *Chapters 1, 2 and 3*	Analysis of publications, journal and newspaper articles and relevant local authority committee reports.	To establish a broad perspective on recent developments as a starting point for more detailed research and to firm up on an appropriate topic.
Investigation of secondary information outlining the detailed position on Education management and socio-economic conditions within the former Strathclyde Region. *Chapter 4*	Analysis of journal articles, Regional Council committee reports, Census data and Council/Scottish Office information on deprivation, school rolls, attainment levels and placing requests.	To establish the particular circumstances within the chosen study area, to inform a suitable scale for analysis (i.e. intra rather than inter-Divisional) and to draw a broad picture of the social ecology within Strathclyde.
Semi-structured interview with a senior Scottish Office official. *Chapter 3*	Questions based on initial conclusions on central government policy drawn from analysis of the literature.	To validate the initial conclusions and investigate Scottish Office perceptions of central/local relations and the adequacy of local authority responses.
5 semi-structured interviews with senior Regional Council officials - covering each section of the HQ directorate and the activity of two Divisional Officers. *Chapters 3 and 4*	Questions again based on initial conclusions from the literature and particular examination of the position in Strathclyde. Triangulation used to verify responses.	Again to validate the initial conclusions and further inform the scale of analysis and the selection of particular study schools. It was also an opportunity to explain the topic and clarify the process for approaching individual schools.
20 semi-structured interviews with non-denominational secondary school teachers across Glasgow. *Chapter 6*	20 out of 26 head teachers agreed to participate in the exercise. Questions were selected to establish head teacher perceptions of the range of issues highlighted in the literature and earlier interviews. Background information drawn from each school's handbook.	To establish practitioner perceptions of the effectiveness of central and local government processes introduced in Education management as they affected their schools. Also to gauge head teacher drive and attitude and examine the suitability of the school for more detailed field work.

cont./

Who/What?	How?	Why?
6 study schools[7] within Glasgow Division selected for detailed field work. *Chapters 5 and 6*	Based on analysis of a range of secondary data[8] used to group schools into specific categories within a school hierarchy.	To allow detailed examination of the implications of change on particular schools, investigating the perceptions of board members and the broader parent body.
3 semi-structured interviews with school board chair people and a further 10 questionnaire responses from the remaining chairs and other parent members. *Chapter 7*	Questions again selected from analysis of the literature and feedback from head teachers.	To sample parent member perceptions as to the role and effectiveness of school boards (as means of parental participation) and the implications of changes in Education management. Also to verify whether they shared head teacher perceptions through the use of triangulation.
The issuing of 1,299 questionnaires to parents across the 5 study school (with a 36% response rate) and the subsequent analysis of findings on an inter and intra-locale basis. *Chapters 8 and 9*	4 page questionnaires focused on the role and operation of boards, the effectiveness of two-way communications and the strength of parent opinion on a range of Education management issues. Profiling questions were also asked to allow inter and intra-school analysis of responses.	To investigate parental perceptions of the effectiveness and representative nature of boards at each school, to measure the strength of attitude and frequency of action taken by parents and to determine whether opinions or actions were stronger amongst some groups of parents than others (based on the profiling information)

This primary data gathering was supplemented by a degree of content analysis, considering a range of supporting contextual information to support each conclusion. Marshall and Rossman (1989) acknowledge that content analysis is difficult to define, but suggest that "it is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p.98). In short, inferences are made by analysing types of communication (usually written information, but also speeches and other verbal messages) to identify the context within which

[7] One school opted to withdraw from the research prior to completion of the board member interviews
[8] See Figure 5.3

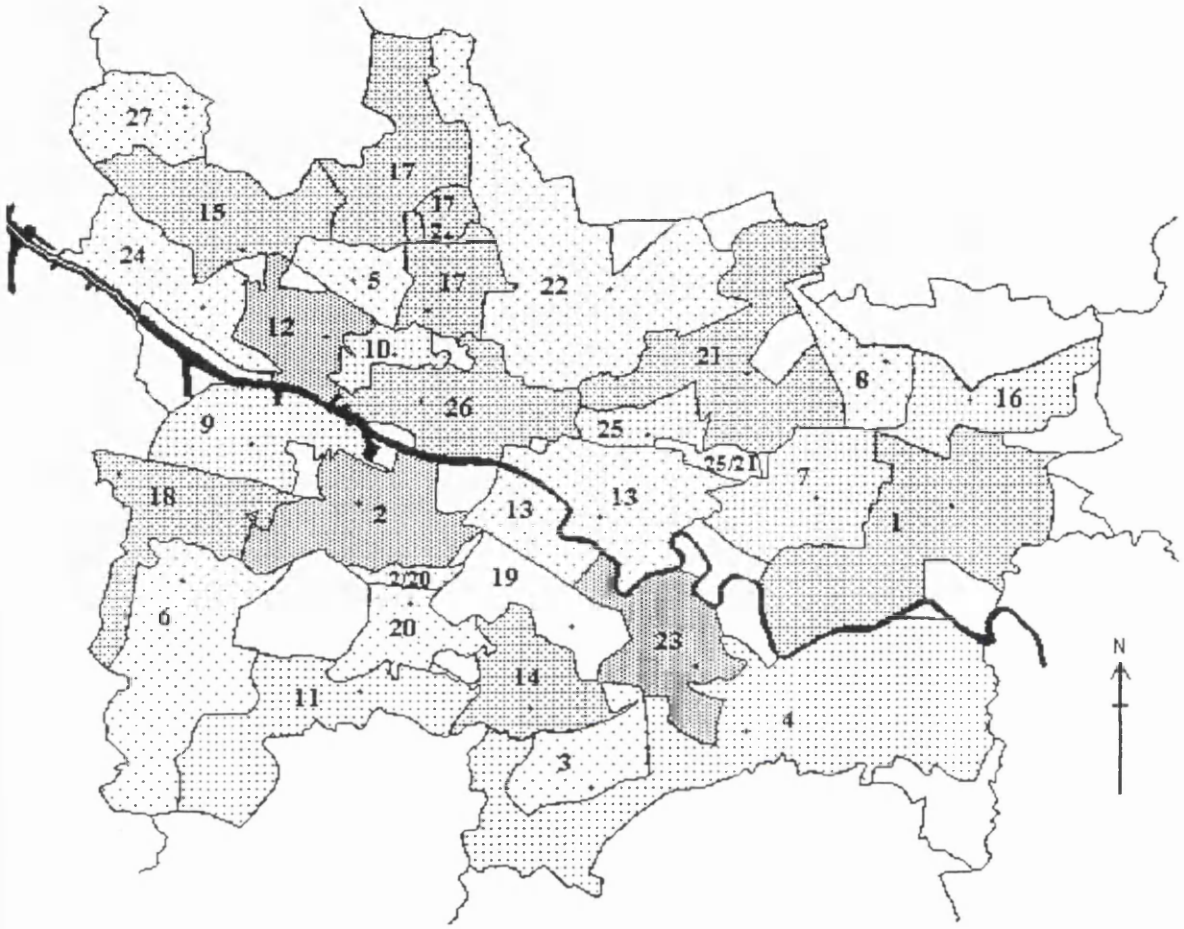
activity is being undertaken. This was used to confirm the basis of key relationships between tiers and inform the field work required and subsequent methods adopted. Personal experience again proved extremely useful.

The focus, information and data used had to be selected carefully. As mentioned earlier, some minor concerns existed about the selection of non-denominational secondary schools alone as a focus for the study. In short, Glasgow Division also had/has a number of denominational schools which were not included. As a result of the fact that the denominational and non-denominational catchment boundaries were not coterminous it was felt that the spatial analysis would be unnecessarily complicated. This may raise questions about the general applicability of any conclusions drawn from assessment of secondary school Education within the city. However, it was not considered that the nature of "locale" or "community" would alter sufficiently as a term of reference between non denominational and denominational catchments to threaten the validity of the research findings (although it is acknowledged that "community" feeling may express itself more cohesively in some predominantly Roman Catholic areas[9] within the city as a result of historical patterns of perceived discrimination).

The validity of primary and secondary data also had to be checked. Interviews and questionnaires were structured to allow an element of cross-checking (triangulation) of responses. In addition, some key factual information (e.g. composition and election of the board) was validated with all participants in the study schools.

[9] No specific enclaves of substantial expanse are generally deemed to exist in the city

Figure 5.3 - Strathclyde Regional Council, Glasgow Division:
Non-Denominational Secondary School Catchment Areas 1993



School

1. Bannerman High
2. Ballahouston Academy
3. Castlemilk Secondary
4. Cathkin High
5. Cleveden
6. Crookston Castle
7. Eastbank Academy
8. Garthamlock
9. Govan High
10. Hillhead High
11. Hillpark
12. Hyndland
13. John Street
14. King's Park
15. Knightswood
16. Lochend
17. North Kelvinside
18. Penilee
19. Queen's Park
20. Shawlands Academy
21. Smithycroft
22. Springburn Academy
23. Stonelaw High
24. Victoria Drive
25. Whitehill
26. Woodside
27. Drumchapel

A substantial degree of consistency in the sources of qualitative information was also attempted. These included:

- school year books for background information;
- official Scottish Office and Regional Council bulletins for quantitative data;
- the use of head teachers as school contacts;
- the use of chairpeople as board contacts; and
- the targeting of "same year"[10] parents for questionnaire sampling.

The use of quotes from key players in the body of the text has also been approached with caution. In the majority of occasions, quotes have been used to demonstrate and emphasise a particular point consistently being made by interviewees, or to support a position taken in the literature. On other occasions, quotes have been selected to highlight contradictions in responses or exceptions to commonly held views. In such instances, this has been clearly identified in the text.

The eliciting of consistency in verbal responses was attempted through the use of semi-structured interviews. The first interview sought the views of a senior Scottish Office official as to central government's practical thinking behind the series of Educational management initiatives implemented in recent years. This was followed by five interviews with senior strategists at Strathclyde Regional Council[11] in an attempt to evaluate their perceptions of the central initiatives and glean contextual information on the LEA responses. The information forthcoming proved invaluable at the design stage of the research study. The field work itself involved further semi-structured interviews

[10] The parents of 1st and 4th Year pupils were sampled at each study school

[11] All interviewees were Chief Officers of the Council, identified as appropriate contacts by the Director of Education. The number of interviews was seen as allowing an element of cross-checking of much of the information provided.

with head teachers and parent board members, followed by a questionnaire based analysis of parental views.

Whilst the structure and emphasis of any survey can allow the researcher to gatekeep information, care was taken to ensure that the points raised closely reflected the generality of issues consistently highlighted in the literature and identified as significant by the senior practitioners. The field work interviews and questionnaires were piloted by seeking comments from the LEA practitioners and a selected number of head teachers, board members and parents in non-case study schools. The pilots were progressed with a view to testing the relevance, sensitivity and ambiguity of the interview and questionnaires questions. Refinements were made as a result, minimising the extent to which subsequent respondent misunderstanding of the questions or issues would arise. Similarly, school board interviews and parent questionnaires were issued in draft form to head teachers in each of the study schools. On these occasions only limited amendments were suggested.

To ensure consistency in approach and focus, the research assistants used to interview head teachers were well briefed as to the study topic and the nature of information being sought. Both assistants read the background literature chapters and met with the researcher on a number of occasions to discuss progression of the research. This meant that all three interviewers were well placed to clarify ambiguities arising or probe interviewees for further information. They were also in a position to explore any new avenues coming to the fore as questioning progressed. Both assistants were Honours Geography students with particular interest and taught experience of socio-political issues. Whilst an element of inconsistency was undoubtedly introduced by using research assistants, it is not felt that this significantly affected the validity of the

study findings. It is also worth noting that all fieldwork progressed after the study schools were selected (predominantly on the basis of quantitative secondary data and the researcher's own subjective categorisation) was undertaken directly by the researcher.

Case Study Selection - *Why* is the Topic Being Examined?

Quantitative analysis of inter-school trends would be insufficient and inappropriate on its own due to the relatively small number of secondary schools within the identified field work area. As a result, quantitative statistical analyses of secondary data and primary samples of intra-school parental attitudes were supplemented by the use of well-established qualitative research techniques. The non-denominational secondary school catchments are mapped in Figure 5.3. Quantitative methods were used to inform the selection of sample schools (through statistical analysis of secondary data on affluence/deprivation and Educational trends) and analyse questionnaire returns outlining parental views. Statistical analysis[12] of inter-group and inter-area trends could be undertaken as a result, with findings and patterns linked back to the qualitative information which provided the main methodological approach to the study.

When it comes to qualitative methods open to researchers, Marshall and Rossman (1989) point out that "there are no explicit, guaranteed recipes to follow for pulling together a coherent, convincing, winning research proposal" (p11). Nevertheless, this section attempts to systematically analyse the methods adopted and

[12] Using SPSS for Windows software

the rationale behind the case study selection. Further details and justification for the individual techniques used are discussed in the introduction to each specific piece of fieldwork.

Marshall and Rossman (1989) point out that regardless of which qualitative research technique is adopted, "systematic enquiry must occur in a natural setting rather than an artificially constrained one ... (However) approaches vary, depending on how intrusive the researcher is required to be in the gathering of data, whether those data document non-verbal or verbal behaviour or both, whether it is appropriate to question the participants as to how they view their worlds, or how the data can most fruitfully be analysed" (p.10-11). A fair degree of discretion in approach was therefore available for consideration when the research was being designed.

In saying that, Marshall and Rossman (1989) argue that when developing an argument for the method(s) being adopted, all research must be seen to have:

- a substantive focus or "solid rationale", showing that the case study relates to a larger phenomenon (e.g. theoretical consideration, national policy trend, consistent behaviour patterns); and
- a soundness of design drawn from an understanding of the literature on methodologies, including the following decision areas:
    - assumptions of qualitative approaches;
    - sample selection logic;
    - consideration of ethical issues; and
    - specific attention to the trustworthiness of the overall approach.

The following sections examine the rationale for the specifics of the methodology adopted based on the above categorisations.

Substantive Focus Or "Solid Rationale"

Marshall and Rossman (1989) point out that "personal, tacit theory and formal theory (from a literature review) help to bring the question, the curious phenomenon, or the problematic issue into focus. The potential research moves from a troubling and/or intriguing real-world observation to personal, to formal theory, concepts, and models from literature which frame a focused research question. The researcher may create a model, ascertain relevant concepts, develop a set of guiding hypotheses, and even derive operational definitions from the related literature review. S/he may also use the review to justify the setting and the sample for the study. Then s/he will go forth to collect data" (p.22). Such guidance informed the subsequent research framework adopted. In short, following the "intriguing real-world observation" of apparent changes in the field of local government services and the resulting implications for certain groups, consideration was given to broader changes in the tri-partite relationship and the overall socio-political geography of the city. From this, a focused and applied research question was devised relating to the implications of changes in public Education management, with subsequent detailed analysis being undertaken to allow broad conclusions to be drawn on the implications of change.

To be of significance, it is important that an applied and policy-oriented research proposal (such as this) considers the following questions at the outset:

- To whom will the research be significant?
  - who has an interest in this domain of enquiry?
  - what do we already know about the topic?
  - what has not been answered adequately in previous research?

- how will this research add to knowledge, practice and policy?

- What techniques will be used to conduct the research?
- Can the research feasibly be undertaken by the researcher?

The research was seen as being significant to academics (in the fields of Geography, Political and Social Science and Education), public policy planners and local government practitioners involved in implementing and reviewing Educational policy and practice. Academically, the research was considered to have broad implications, influencing thinking on local government political theory, post-Fordism, managerialism, accountability/participation, citizenship/consumerism, locality and the geography of the city.

It was further envisaged that there would be multiple interests in this domain of enquiry. In addition to its academic value, the outcome of the research was seen to be significant for strategic planners in local government and both direct producers and consumers of public services. Whilst not envisaged as a primary consideration at the outset, the findings are also likely to be of interest to political parties in terms of future public policy options. The findings were considered to be of specific and general significance. For example, the assessment of the success to date of specific developments in the field of parental participation in public Education (one element of the case study) was seen as useful not only to those directly employed/interested in that service, but also to those with alternative remits considering the implications of existing arrangements for participation in other areas of public service.

Whilst a substantial amount of research had already been undertaken in the study area, the specific focus on Education came at a time when a number of significant national and local initiatives had been implemented in that field and little detailed

analysis of their success, or otherwise, appeared to have been undertaken. These initiatives were considered to be based to some degree on elements of New Right thinking, but were also seen to be symptomatic of the purported post-Fordist patterns of public service consumption. Moreover, many of the initiatives could be considered to have substantial implications for the tri-partite balance of power between central government, local government and civil society. To that degree, the research was considered to be a useful opportunity to evaluate particular elements of New Right policy in light of broader theories on post-Fordism, central/local relations and the extent to which they impinged on individuals and communities in different locales throughout the city. The extent to which these questions remained to be answered from previous research is debatable, although the ongoing discussion as to the nature of post-Fordism (and indeed Fordism), the success or otherwise of New Right thinking on Education and the rebirth of interest in community planning suggests that further significant opportunities for valuable research remain available.

Whilst the techniques used to undertake the research are discussed generally above and in more detail in subsequent chapters on the specific field work, the feasibility of undertaking the research was a dominant factor in determining the specifics of the field work undertaken. It was not envisaged that the subject matter itself was of a nature which would cause particular difficulties, but the scale of the study was curtailed somewhat by the resources available and time constraints on the researcher. Moreover, the spatial nature of the analysis presented problems when considering the overlap in service provision to denominational and non-denominational schools. As outlined earlier, whilst there was much spatial overlap in the catchments, their boundaries were not coterminous. This resulted in a decision to consider only non-

denominational schools representing around 70% of the total pupil population of the Division being examined. Whilst unfortunate from a sample size perspective, this was not considered to be a significant factor in the validation of the information collected or conclusions drawn. Further consideration of problems encountered in undertaking the research are outlined in a separate section later in the Chapter.

Soundness of Design

Assumptions Of Qualitative Approaches

Turning to further justification for the adoption of qualitative techniques, Marshall (1985) emphasises a number of particular areas where qualitative research would be favoured over quantitative techniques. This includes research that:

- cannot be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons
- delves in depth into complexities and processes
- still requires relevant variables to be identified
- seeks to explore where and why policy, folk wisdom, and practice do not work
- considers unknown societies or innovative systems
- examines informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organisations
- focuses on real, as opposed to stated, organisational goals.

Furthermore, Marshall and Rossman (1989) state that "the strengths of qualitative studies should be demonstrated for research that is exploratory or descriptive and that stresses the importance of context, setting, and subjects' frame of reference" (p.46). Clearly then, the nature of the chosen study leant itself strongly

towards the use of qualitative techniques. Indeed, variations in the extent to which participation varied between groups of individuals depending on their socio-spatial context and the influence of key players in the management of schools were key elements in the overall research focus.

Zelditch (1962) identifies two criteria on which qualitative research proposals are judged. Stringent attempts have been made to ensure that these criteria were met. Firstly, *informational adequacy* requires the researcher to have a precise and accurate understanding of the complexities of both the study phenomenon and particular case study to ensure that the sought-after information can be elicited. In response, general and specific literature reviews, detailed secondary data analysis and interviews with senior officials (at the Scottish Office and the Regional Council) were undertaken in an attempt to validate the proposed study topic. This highlighted and supported both the relevance of the subject matter and the feasibility of both the proposed methodology and the particular fieldwork. The researcher's own experience also proved invaluable. Secondly, *efficiency* is essential to the plan if adequate data is to be collected at the least cost in terms of time, access, and cost to participants. This was optimised through the use of research assistants to undertake particular elements of the fieldwork and by considering the sensitive timing of contact with each "tier" of participant. The study timetable and adopted methodology was designed with this in mind. Again, personal position and experience proved to be of significant benefit in accessing information and key individuals. Marshall and Rossman (1989) add a third criterion of *ethical considerations* to this list. Such considerations are discussed in more detail later in the section.

Sample Selection Logic

After identifying the focused research question regarding changes in the nature of public Education, the following specific issues required addressing:

- Why choose the former Strathclyde Regional Council as the service provider/ governor to examine?
- Why focus on Glasgow Division (one of five administrative areas in the former Region)?
- Why opt for an inter-school analysis, rather than inter-Divisional or inter-authority?
- What is the basis for the selection of the specific study schools?
- What was the basis for the selection of each tier/key player in the process?

Strathclyde Regional Council appeared an appropriate focus for the study for a number of geographical, political, managerial and practical reasons (discussed below). Whilst the demise of the Region with Local Government Reorganisation in April 1996 has proved unfortunate in terms of timing, the findings remain of significance to Glasgow City Council and the other unitary authorities previously covered by the Region. It is not considered that the demise of the Region itself is significant in terms of the validity or applicability of the research findings. Moreover, whilst the threat of Reorganisation may have impinged on the Region's proposed school rationalisation programme in the mid-1990s, it is not thought to have had major implications for the nature or speed of change in Education management over the period of the fieldwork (1992-1995).

The area formerly covered by Strathclyde contains the largest concentration of population of all Scotland's (former) Regional Councils and accounts for the largest

proportion of spending on Education in the country. Indeed, in 1995/96 the revenue budget of the Region's Glasgow Educational Division exceeded that of Glasgow City Council in its entirety. The focus of the study on Strathclyde (and indeed Glasgow Division) therefore appeared justifiable. Largely as a result of these factors, the former Regional Council became a major voice and influence in the UK political scene on local, national and European issues. This became a significant factor at the time of Local Government Reorganisation. Conservative Government opposition to Labour dominated Strathclyde culminated in the then Prime Minister John Major's description of the Regional Council as "a monstrosity" during a speech on the future of local government at the 1992 Conservative Party Conference. At one stage, the size and nature of the Regional Council alone appeared to be one of the few criteria used informally by the Scottish Office to justify Reorganisation. The high and somewhat sensitive profile resulting from the adoption of the Regional Council as a national "political football" thus became a further important justification for its selection in the study.

From a managerial perspective, Strathclyde had taken a number of pro-active steps in an attempt to deal with its geographical expanse, concerns over the isolation of the centre from peripheral areas and the aforementioned political criticism. As these were discussed in some detail in the previous chapter it is not proposed to go over them again here. However, it is worth noting that they reflect not only innovative responses to central government Education management proposals, but also a range of responses covering physical, democratic and managerial decentralisation. Such activity made the Regional Council a useful focus for analysis. This was supplemented by a range of positive responses to addressing socio-economic disparities across the Region under the

umbrella of an integrated Social Strategy (a strategy not mutually exclusive to the decentralisation activity).

At a sub-Regional level, Glasgow appeared an appropriate focus because of the large number of schools, variety of catchments and its socio-ecological complexity. This was seen as both providing a large enough selection of schools for sampling and allowing analysis of inter-catchment trends less apparent in smaller/less concentrated areas. Secondly, socio-spatial inequalities and the density of population within the city made it of particular interest in terms of consideration of inter-neighbourhood/locale disparities. This provided opportunities to consider patterns of parental choice and the implications of policy on the reduction, maintenance and/or exacerbation of these socio-spatial disparities. Thirdly, as Scotland's largest city, it was presumed that Glasgow would facilitate the types of choices symptomatic of changing patterns of public service consumption. Finally, there was a recent history of high profile "activity" in the city relating to Education as a result of a largely unsuccessful process of school rationalisation undertaken in the late 1980's by the Regional Council.

An inter-school analysis was regarded as more relevant and feasible than an inter-divisional comparison. The geographic expanse of each division outwith Glasgow was considered to produce practical difficulties in completing an extensive analysis, as would the low population density within these more rural areas. Perhaps of greatest significance were concerns about the possible absence of clear or substantial trends outwith urban areas. For example, Raab and Adler (1988) indicated significant differences in patterns of parental choice in rural and urban areas, suggesting this was partially caused by the lack of proximate alternative schools outwith the city. As a result, it was considered that patterns of influence and service consumption may be

more sophisticated in urban areas. Analysis of the phenomena at the selected intra-divisional level thus appeared more appropriate.

Whilst justification for the selection of specific schools within Glasgow Division is given later in the Chapter, it is worth noting that the selection was based on consideration of a number of broad Educational, spatial and socio-economic variables used to band each school in one of three of categories. Whilst acknowledging an element of subjectivity in the banding process, objective quantitative criteria were also heavily relied upon. Following more detailed secondary vetting (for example, checking the existence of a school board and establishing a willingness to participate), study schools were selected from each category to allow an element of both inter-category and intra-divisional analysis.

During the process, analysis was undertaken of primary information gathered from the Scottish Office, Regional HQ, Divisional HQ, head teachers, school board members and parents. These tiers/levels/individuals were selected to give the broadest range of opinion and assessment on the Education management developments. Not only were the comments and/or returns interesting in their own right, but they were prompted with the intention of establishing perceptions of key inter "tier" relations. It was anticipated that relations between each tier would vary in nature between the study schools, allowing a further level of analysis. Investigation of the nature of local relations in the context of the tri-partite relationship was therefore facilitated.

Ethical Issues

A number of ethical considerations required to be addressed in the design of the study and methods used. Perhaps of greatest significance was the desire for anonymity expressed by virtually every individual contacted as part of the study. This was particularly relevant where specific quotes were to be used in support of general concerns/phenomena. The guarantee that comments would not be directly attributable and key players would not be named proved sufficient in all cases. This was not seen as undermining the strength of the information received or the subsequent analysis. On other occasions (e.g. when considering parental responses), information was considered solely in summary form, although the profiling information allowed trends to be examined across individual parent groupings. This was seen as adequate in fulfilling the requirements of the quantitative element of the analysis.

The personal imposition on each key player in the analysis was a further ethical factor in shaping the specifics of the methods adopted. Attempts were made to minimise the administrative role for each school in the study, with interviews and surveys timed sensitively in light of pressure points in the school calendar. The use of research assistants allowed concentration of a range interviews at suitable times to head teachers, with maximum flexibility offered to all players regarding the timing of their role in the study. The eventual sample used in the detailed fieldwork was constrained to some degree by the head teachers' willingness to designate time to participate. Whilst not ideal, this was not seen as significantly undermining the breadth of the study or the credibility of the conclusions reached.

The implications of the study on those "touched" by involvement are also worthy of brief consideration. Interviews and questionnaires were worded in such a way as to attempt to minimise the feeling of vulnerability or isolation of key players. For example, care was taken to ensure that questions to head teachers and board members on the adequacy of communications were not worded in such a manner as to appear overt attacks on their own abilities. Similarly, questions to parents were worded cautiously to ensure that their adequacy as guardians of their child's education was not seen to be queried. At the same time, care was also taken during interviews to minimise the extent to which respondents were being led towards certain responses which might favour the outcome of the research.

A final ethical issue related to the handling of the perceived conflict of interest expressed by a minority of head teachers when speaking on behalf of the school about relations with the Regional Council HQ or the school board. It was felt that the promise of anonymity ensured that this issue did not curtail the extent of head teacher comment, but assurances of sensitive consideration appeared appreciated. Whilst it is difficult to judge the extent to which such concerns inhibited responses, few reservations seemed apparent during the course of the interviews.

The Trustworthiness Of The Overall Approach

Responses to each of the above headings demonstrate a rigorous and systematic approach to the design of the study approach. Proactive consideration of the practical and ethical issues surrounding the work allowed a sufficient degree of flexibility to be

built into the subsequent process. This went much of the way towards ensuring that substantial shifts of focus during the field work were not required. Moreover, as each stage in the field work was progressed the framework for analysis built on the findings to date, maximising the extent to which the perceptions of each tier could be cross-checked against those of other key players.

Problems Encountered

A number of methodological and practical difficulties were encountered in progressing the research. Some problems have been discussed earlier in the Chapter and will not be revisited in detail. Much of the difficulty stemmed from the time pressures placed on the researcher as a result of the part-time nature of the exercise. Interviews and contact with schools usually had to be progressed during office hours, meaning that flexible working and the use of research assistants had to be exploited to complete the more time intensive elements of the field work. The loss of consistency through the use of research assistants was discussed earlier at some length. In summary, this issue was minimised by the use of semi-structured interviews, piloting and detailed pre-survey briefing.

Some problems were encountered in terms of respondent understanding at each of the fieldwork. While piloting of questionnaires reduced the frequency and extent of the problem, it is presumed that an element of error in responses will have arisen. This was minimised during the interview stages as any apparent misunderstandings could be corrected there and then by the interviewer. Even so, there would likely be occasion where such a misunderstanding was not apparent in the answer given. About 10 to 15

of the parent questionnaires were "spoiled" as a result of respondents appearing to be unsure as to the meaning of some questions or becoming confused during completion of the exercise. These have not been included in the figures for returned questionnaires or the analysis that followed. It is presumed that other respondents encountered similar difficulties, but chose to answer "as best they could". Once again, it is considered that piloting reduced the frequency of such occurrences.

A further difficulty resulted from the multiple levels of contact required at each school (head teacher, board and parents). After initial agreement to participate, two schools withdrew from the study after the first stage of the field work. This occurred despite a clear indication from the outset of the predicted workload and guarantees of minimal implications for school staff. On occasion, there appeared no rationale behind school withdrawal. This caused problems in terms of finding suitable schools falling within each category being investigated in the case study. Indeed, one school chose to withdraw after final selection of the study schools had been made and the second phase of the field work completed. As a result of the small sample size for detailed analysis, it would be illogical to conclude that the research findings have not been weakened to a limited degree as a result.

A further (obvious) problem relates to the demise of the former Regional Council at Local Government Reorganisation in 1996. This is not considered to have significantly influenced the field work undertaken, or indeed the nature of change in Education management during the case study duration. However, personal experience of local authority activity in the run up to Reorganisation suggests that it is likely to have impinged on the pace of and enthusiasm for change. More obviously, questions arise as to the extent to which the research proves valuable in light of the Region's

demise. In reality, responsibility for Education in the case study area transferred in its totality to the new Glasgow Unitary Council. It is envisaged that the findings will be of equal interest to the new authority, especially as it shapes its own vision and processes for Education in the city. The abstraction of the findings to the context of broader patterns of public service provision is not unduly affected by the demise of the Regional Council.

Further general problems relate to the scale of the phenomena being investigated. It is difficult to propose direct causal relationships between attitudes and actions expressed in particular locales and the applicability of purported macro level changes (e.g. the move from Fordism to post-Fordism, the success or failure of competition or the nurturing of a communitarianist ethos). Nonetheless, the findings from the field work have allowed deductions to be made in support of the literature in each area, testing the generality of the phenomena discussed as they appear on the ground.

Having established the justification for the adopted methodology, the remainder of the chapter goes on to consider the key geographical tenets underpinning the research, including examination of the geography of the city and the spatial manifestation of the range of variables used to select the specific study schools chosen for the field work.

Locality, Locale and the Geography of the City

A number of factors require to be considered when defining the nature of the geography of any place. To some extent the focus on these will vary depending on the nature and scale of the phenomenon being examined. For example, analysis of inter-urban migration patterns will focus on a separate range of variables than a more detailed intra-urban study of patterns of political patronage. However, whilst the focus may vary, the principles remain consistent, manifesting themselves in a range of complex inter-related and dynamic variables overlapping spatially on a given study area. For the purpose of this study, the focus centres around the social ecology of the city; expressing itself in different spatially manifested patterns of relative affluence/deprivation, tenure, influence, social and physical mobility, participation, citizenship and consumption of services. These phenomena express themselves on a city-wide scale. However, there is also complex and dynamic interaction between them at the intra-urban level. The study examines both perspectives, drawing conclusions linking to broader phenomena operating at a national and international level.

As outlined in Chapter 1, a distinct spatial manifestation of civil society on the ground may be difficult to identify. Indeed, the intangible nature of concepts such as civil society, community and locale have been a focus of debate for geographers and political scientists for some time. The physical expression of particular phenomena on the ground is blurred by the range of variables interacting to determine and explain local social, economic or political behaviour. Nonetheless, the concepts provide a useful basis for beginning to analyse complex inter-relationships between groups of individuals within and between distinct geographical areas. The tenet of locality in the past may

have been seen as providing one sufficiently broad context for consideration of the range of study variables. Although interpretations of the concept vary, locality raises some interesting questions in the local political arena. For example: why are democratic rights unevenly acted upon? Why are some locally based issues capable of projecting the interest of the local population well beyond the local political arena?

Cooke (1989) defines locality as "the simple, descriptive term for the place where people live out their daily working and domestic lives and around which they may, on occasion, act more politically than simply voting in local, national, or supranational elections" (p.3). In addition, he suggests that this area is likely to coincide with the area within which residents consume local services. He sees the extent to which localities act as a base for social mobilisation and influence varying from one to another. General social, economic and political processes affect the economies of all localities, but not necessarily in the same way, with some benefiting whilst others suffer. Those which benefit apparently have more power to exert influence, resulting in a cyclical process of increased influence over time. Spatially uneven patterns of influence and advantage therefore result. The spatial definition of each locality, its position within the context of the broader geography of the city and the strength of its voice in the tri-partite relationship therefore become key factors in any detailed geographical analysis. Cooke (1989) also suggests that the general processes vary over time and place, the nature of localities constantly changes, re-emphasising the dynamic nature of both the tri-partite relationship and the geography of the city. Dickens (1988) reinforces this idea of dynamism, suggesting that people involved in the every day activity of their locality "are exploiting and changing wider

social relations such as those between classes, between genders or between owners and non owners of domestic property".

Physical mobility within and between each locality also requires consideration. These include the availability and cost of public transport in and between different localities, the pull and push factors attracting or demanding mobility and the range of choices practically and psychologically available to those prepared to be mobile. On top of that, Cooke (1989) refers to "psychological goods" associated with known locality and community identity. These would appear to potentially be at their strongest where locality is defined around a given community focus, such as a school or church.

Duncan (1989) refers to "two functions" of locality for consideration in analysis. The first function concerns locality as a case study, where an individual place of defined size is considered. The second function signifies the idea that "in relation to general social or economic processes (such as de-industrialisation) there might be a measure of local autonomy or discretion involved in the way in which such processes are experienced in particular places: the latter could not be "read off" from the former in some predetermined way without consideration of local actions" (Gyford 1991, p.7).

At the case study level, a locality is little more than an arbitrary ring drawn around a particular set of overlapping variables being analysed. This may be a school catchment area, a local authority housing estate, or a specific ethnic community. However, the scale of the locality being analysed may vary from national to regional to local. Such an idea suggests that a locality varies depending on the nature of the study being undertaken, or the variables being analysed. As Duncan (1989) points out, a locality does not have fixed boundaries, but rather is defined in terms of the context of analysis. When considering the second function - that relating to a degree of local

autonomy in response to general social processes - the boundaries of the locality will overlap spatially with the physical extent of the autonomous area. This may vary depending on the issue, and the extent of involvement of the local population. The subjective element in defining locality in each particular study is again emphasised.

For the purpose of this piece of research, the case study approach has been taken in the first instance (with locality defined on a school catchment basis) to allow a focus for the detailed field work and to facilitate comparative analysis. However, attention is then turned to Duncan's (1989) second function in an attempt to explain inter and intra area consistencies and disparities.

The term "locality" has more recently been considered spatially deterministic, thus becoming somewhat discredited. As a result, the term "locale" has been selected for this study in an attempt to recognise concerns regarding the deterministic nature of "locality", whilst acknowledging the growing attention being paid by academics, policy-makers and practitioners to spatially expressed concept such as communitarianism and community planning.

Key Research Questions: Locale and Geography of the City

What are the implications of the socio-political and Education management case study findings for each locale and the overall socio-political geography of the city?

The literature points out that considerable shifts have occurred in the UK economic structure over the last few years (Gyford, 1991). These have particular relevance to each locale in the UK due to traditional links between tenure and position

in the occupational hierarchy (Hamnett, 1996). In addition, changing labour markets and labour relations have been a key element in the purported move to post-Fordism (Stoker, 1991). In response to this, the diversity of local populations has increased, with the characteristics of locales varying from place to place. Developments in Education management have also had a significant effect. Chapter 3 highlighted the extent to which closure, merger and parental choice have combined with demographic and residential change to impinge on each locale. The research draws conclusions on the extent to which the socio-political and Education management changes have impinged on the case study locales and the possible implications for this on the overall geography of the city.

Do inter-locale disparities in these phenomena exist? Can these be traced to the nature of particular locales? (e.g. is locale a factor in influencing patterns of service consumption?)

Gyford (1991), Stoker (1991) and Hamnett (1996) suggest that macro-level changes have not occurred uniformly. A new spatial division of labour, influence, social mobility and life chances has overlaid an already complex local ecology, developed in response to the concentration on specific industries in the past, the resultant differing development of various locales, traditional tenure patterns and the differing responses of the local state to these a broader social and legislative changes. Long-standing variations in employment rates, economic development, academic achievement, and political affiliation on a sub national level further muddy the picture.

Figure 5.4 - Key Research Questions: Locale and Geography of the City[13]

- What are the implications of the socio-political and Education management case study findings for each locale and the overall socio-political geography of the city?
- Do inter-locale disparities in these phenomena exist? Can these be traced to the nature of particular locales? (e.g. is locale a factor in influencing patterns of service consumption?)
- Has consumerism undermined community focus and locale homogeneity? And, if so, to what degree?
- What do the findings imply about the appropriateness of area-based solutions as a means of fulfilling a redistributive role of local government?
- How are intra-urban local spaces best administered and governed? How does this support each theory of local government?
- Have changes in the tri-partite relationship during the 1980s and early 1990s altered the socio-political geography of the city?

The extent to which locale is a factor in determining patterns of influence and participation is open to question. Duncan (1989) argues that locale has little affect on the workings of political and social processes. Should such an effect exist, he argues that it "would entail the existence of locally specific class and gender relations and forms of political hegemony combining to produce a distinctive local social system or local political culture which would shape the way people act" (in Gyford, 1991, p.20).

[13] Note that the information outlined in Figure 5.2 mirrors that included in Figure 1.3

He cautions against the idea that social systems are created by local areas, as would be implied by the idea of wholly autonomous local social systems or political cultures.

This conclusion appears a little dogmatic, ignoring the implications of shared life experiences in certain areas as a basis for abstracting an emotional and political response. Certainly, there is no guarantee that this will always manifest itself in either a tangible or consistent form. Nonetheless, it would seem naive to ignore the implications of locale as a factor, especially where a single issue (such as a school closure or unpopular planning application) is seen as a threat to a spatially manifested community. Indeed, Cooke (1989) points to the ability of specific locales to develop innovative responses to changes within society. He argues that there is a clear division between locales having a history of active, local policy intervention and those lacking such a history. He points to the fact that many local initiatives occur outside the formal sphere of local government, suggesting that locale itself is often the spur to innovation. He appears to suggest that the definition of locale in terms of shared political or social mobilisation need not necessarily be a defensive response to particular issues imposed from the local or national state. The proactive development of such a locale appears to tie in with the concept of communitarianist based citizenship discussed in Chapter 2.

The case study investigates the nature of inequalities in access to service, influence and participation to identify whether or not specific inter or intra-locale disparities exist. It also examines if any causal links are apparent between the nature of particular locales and the study findings.

Has consumerism undermined community focus and locale homogeneity? If so, to what degree?

A further issue relates to the link between the boundaries of a locale and the existence of a feeling of community within those boundaries. Whilst both concepts remain intangible, a sense of community - expressing itself in some form of shared agenda, focus or experience - would appear to be a basic tenet in any broad definition of locale. This is more tangibly relevant in relation to a particular study school, where a school may act as a shared community focus within a locality defined as the school catchment. Inter-catchment placing requests and school closures may undermine this concept. To that end, the study considers the extent to which policy and broader societal developments may undermine the concepts of community and locality in the long term. One such "broader societal development" may tie into the emphasis on consumerism during the 1970s, 80s and 90s and its implications for communities and any manifestation of the collective good. The study therefore abstracts conclusions on the paradox between these concepts evident in the way the Education management developments manifest themselves on the ground.

What do the findings imply about the appropriateness of area-based solutions as a means of fulfilling a redistributive role of local government?

As detailed in the opening Chapters, local government plays a number of fundamental roles in addressing issues relating to locale. These are not mutually exclusive and include overall resource re-allocation and redistribution; community

development; community consultation, participation and representation; targeted service delivery; and the provision of local access to services and information.

Cooke (1989) points out that many of the poorest locales tend to be heavily dependent upon public expenditure. Hamnett (1996) also points to concentrations of households at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy in distinct areas of public housing. The resultant need for resource re-allocation towards particular localities emphasises the essential role of government, especially local government, as an influencer of the relative and absolute nature of individual locales. Duncan and Goodwin (1988), Hutchinson (1993) and Ranson (1995) argue that uneven development justifies the existence of local government, in that it is the only manner by which a system of Government can cope with diversity. Harloe, Pickvance and Urry (1990) suggest that diversity within society is reflected in variations in public policy between local authorities, supporting their role in the redistribution process. Local authority policies are seen as attempting to cater for the needs of separate locales within their boundaries.

Gyford (1991) points out that "diversity is rooted in actual, lived social experience, rather than being merely a random departure from some supposed national norm" (p.23). Despite the concerns about the representative nature of an increasingly politicised local government raised earlier in the chapter, Gyford's (1991) assertion backs up the need for a strong role based on the concept of "community government" rather than "local administration" (Stewart and Stoker, 1988; Clarke and Stewart, 1992; Stewart, 1995).

The case study examines the extent to which the findings point to an adequate response by the former Regional Council to addressing inter-locale disparities and

whether or not area-based solutions remain viable in light of the imposed changes in Education management and the tenets of broader the New Right agenda.

How are intra-urban local spaces best administered and governed? How does this support each theory of local government?

The key question may be whether local space is managed solely by local government, by the development of inter-agency partnership arrangements or by increasing devolution of management authority to local groups and the private sector (Gyford, 1991). In short, where should power lie? Increased privatisation of local services, a growing emphasis on partnership working and increased public participation were certainly high on the agenda of the former Conservative Governments. Keane (1988) suggests that there may be limits to the extent to which the state can be democratised, but nevertheless urges local authorities to share their power base with local interest groups in an attempt to adequately meet local need in the face of increased centralism. He refers to this process as "the vitalisation of civil society" (in Gyford, 1991, p.27), linking closely with calls from Stoker (1991) for increased participatory democracy to supplement representative democracy. Such moves support the localist interpretation of "enabling community government", representing a pluralist approach in a post-Fordist society. However, elements of public choice theory and communitarianism are also apparent. The research draws conclusions as to how space might "best" be managed, where and how power and influence might be shared and the implications for these findings on the validity of each theory of local government.

Have changes in the tri-partite relationship during the 1980s and early 1990s altered the socio -political geography of the city?

Finally, the research draws on the literature and case study findings to examine whether the discussed changes in the tri-partite relationship have altered the socio-political geography of the city in the manner by which the literature referred to in the opening chapters would have us believe.

Locale/Study School Selection

As outlined earlier in the chapter, Duncan (1989) refers to "two functions" of locality for consideration in analysis. The first function concerns locality as a case study, where an individual place of defined size is considered. The second function signifies the idea that there will be a degree of homogeneity in local responses to broader changes in society. For the purposes of the particular fieldwork, Duncan's first function has been adopted, with the specified catchment[14] areas of individual schools taken to form each locality.

Such catchments reflect historical patterns of attendance drawn around acceptable travel to school areas. Some re-zoning has occurred to address the implications of school closures/mergers. These have been further altered as a result of local changes in residential patterns, urban renewal and alterations to key transport thoroughfares. Moreover, whilst catchments still form the basis for the allocation of pupils to specific schools, parental choice has offered opportunities for inter-catchment

[14] The term "catchment" is used in the context of this particular study to refer to the official catchment area of the school rather than the larger "inter-catchment" area from which each school actually draws it pupils as a result of parental choice.

movement not available in the past. Improved mobility has further facilitated this pattern, as have growing expectations of service "consumers" and the positive promotion of choice by successive Conservative Governments. Only where school rolls exceed capacity are placing requests restricted.

Two perspectives are immediately apparent from having established the catchment as the locale for examination. Firstly, a broad consideration of the social ecology of the city allows each locale to be considered within the wider context of the urban area. The size of school catchments (especially in areas where schools have closed/merged) means that there is a distinct lack of socio-economic homogeneity in each one. Nonetheless, analysis of secondary census information on a postcode scale allows an initial cross-catchment picture of patterns of affluence and deprivation across the city to be drawn up. The most deprived areas of the city were illustrated in Figure 4.2 following discussion of the overall socio-economic picture across the city.

Such information was used as one key factor in the second analytical perspective, considering each individual school within a hierarchy of schools (reflecting that suggested by Gambetta (1987), Bondi (1988) and Martin *et al* (1996) in Chapter 3). The subsequent banding of schools into categories within the hierarchy allows both inter-school and inter-category comparisons to be examined. This builds up a broader picture of relationships between locales and "types" of similar locales (based on Duncan's (1989) case study definition). It also allows broader consideration of the existence or otherwise of homogenous communities within locales; examining each area based on Duncan's second definition of locality (outlined in the previous section).

The criteria used to define each category are outlined in Figure 5.5. These variables are mapped on a catchment by catchment basis in Figure 5.6 (a-d), pointing to

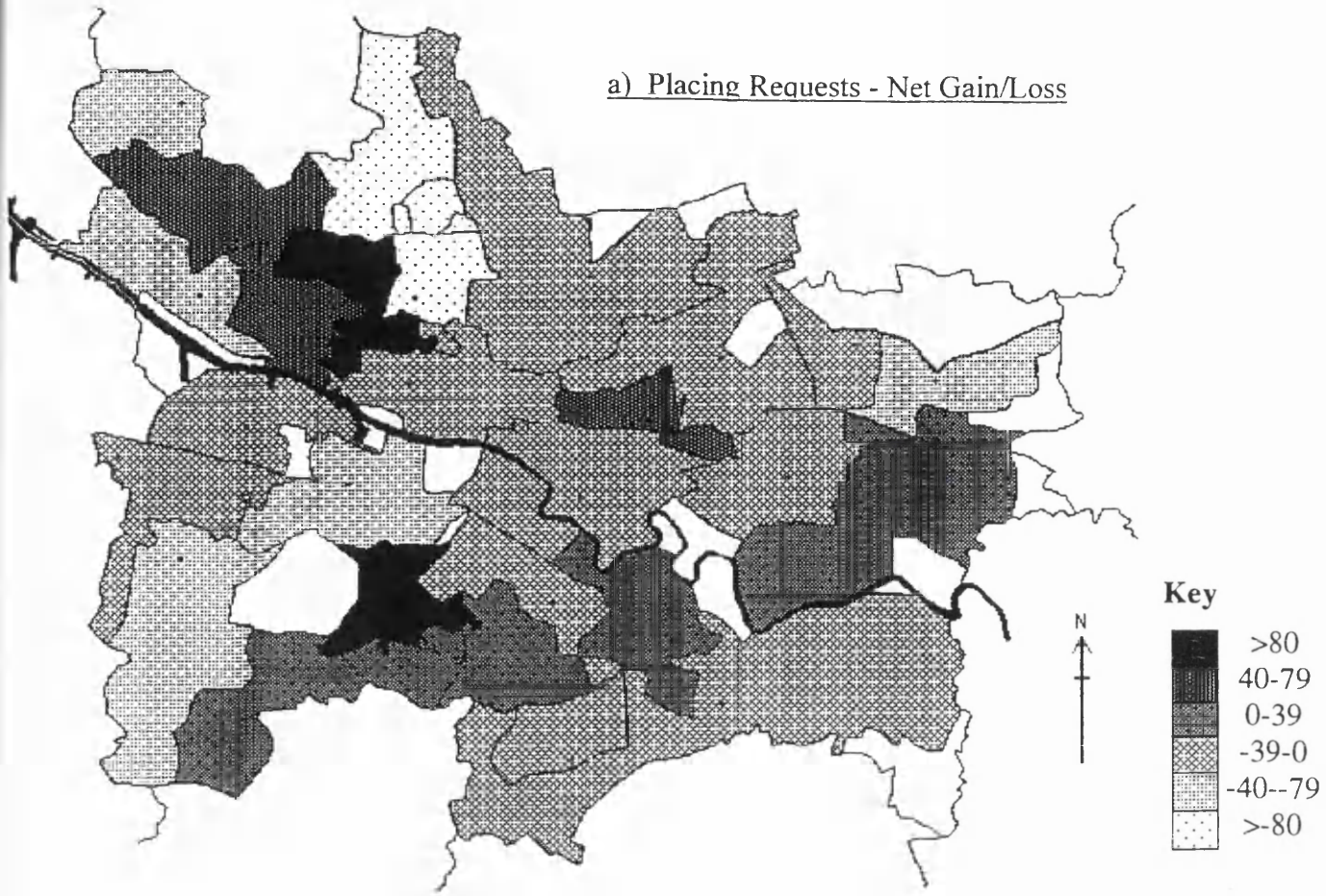
the existence of a spatially manifested hierarchy of school catchments across the city. Initial consideration of the maps appears to support the assertions (drawn from the literature) that schools in more deprived areas are more likely to have lower levels of overall attainment, higher proportions of outward placing requests and lower rolls than schools further up the hierarchy. The "better-performing" schools against each of the criteria are typically and consistently found in the more affluent parts of the city. The detail of Figure 5.6 points to better performing schools having higher rolls and levels of inward placing requests than others. It also suggests that schools with lower rolls (versus capacities) are often more likely to experience pupil loss through outward placing requests, producing the spiral of decline referred to in Chapters 3 and 4. These suggestions will be examined more closely in the ensuing field work.

Study schools were selected from each of the categories in Figure 5.5. Two schools were selected from each category, despite the fact that more schools fell into the middle category than either the top or bottom. It was presumed that trends would be more apparent in schools at the top and bottom than they would be in the middle. Subsequent evaluation of key players'[15] attitudes and actions were used to highlight whether any consistent patterns exist in access to influence and service goods by socio-economic grouping between and across each category. Family size, length of residence and likelihood to participate by other means were also considered as factors affecting parents' attitude and action in terms of participating. Further consideration was given to the extent to which recent local and national policy developments impinged and/or were seen to impinge to varying degrees on the different players. Any apparent inter and intra-locality variations could then be identified.

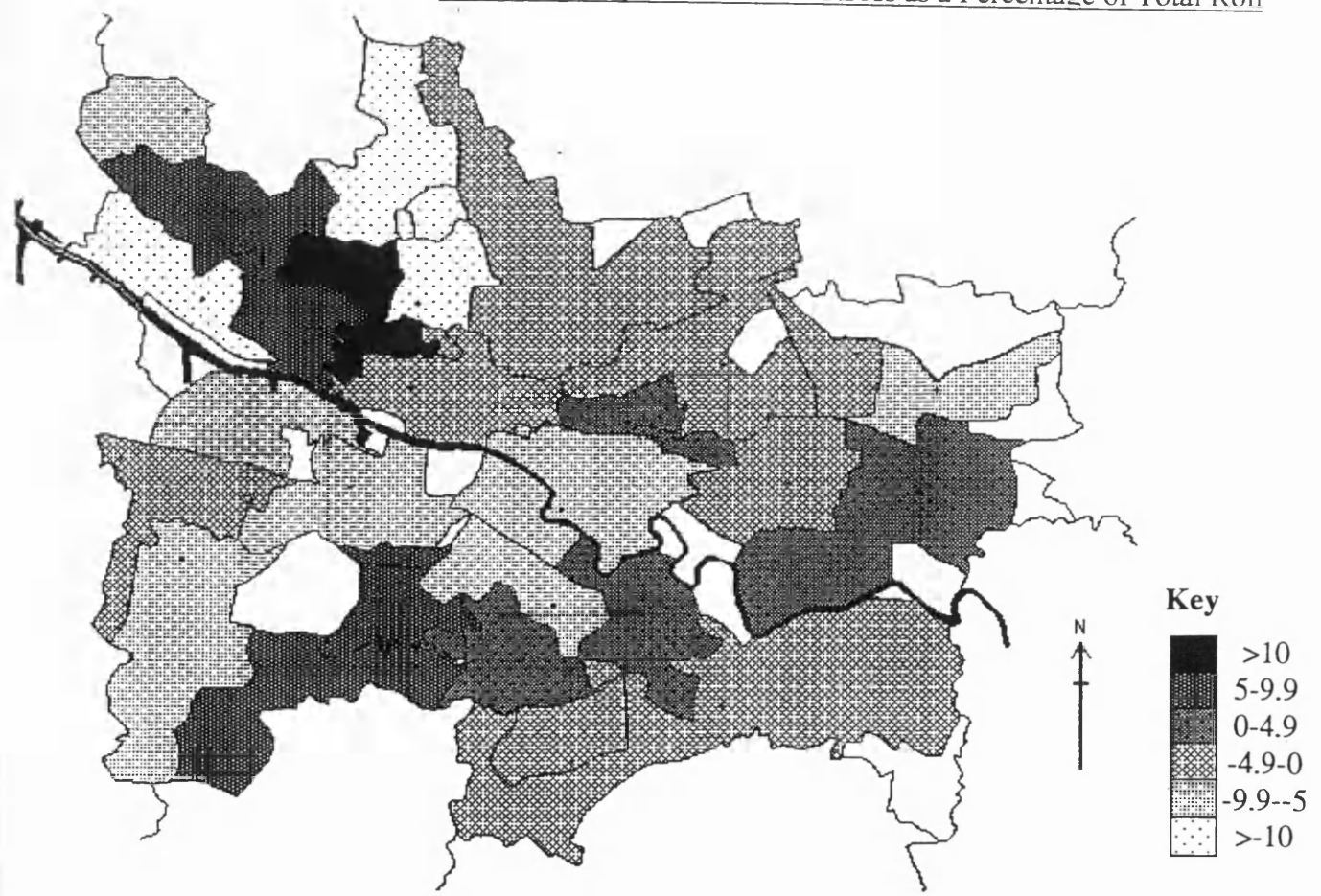
[15] head teachers, school board parent members and parents

Figure 5.6 - Strathclyde Regional Council, Glasgow Division:
Key Criteria by Non-Denominational Secondary School Catchment Areas 1993

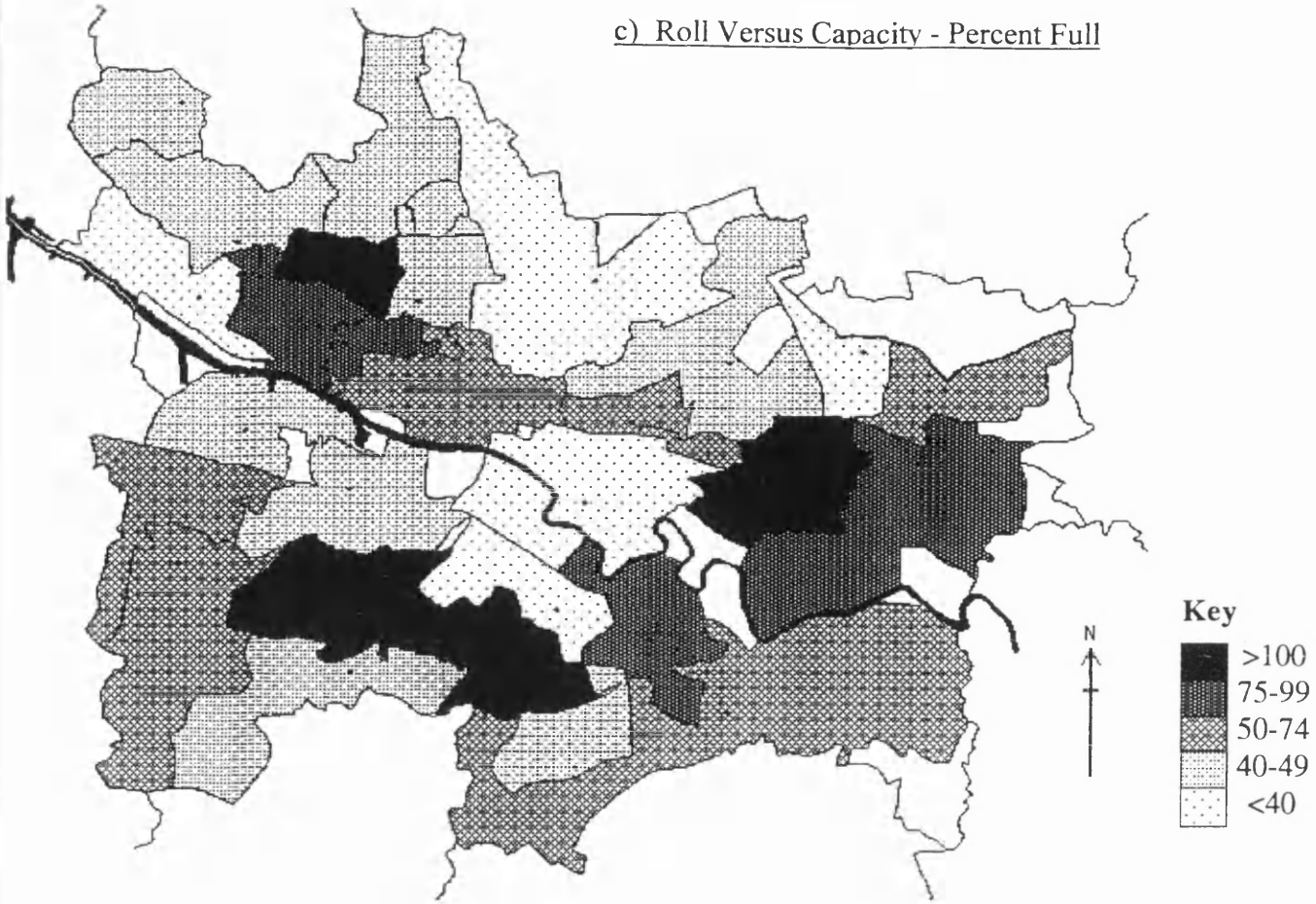
a) Placing Requests - Net Gain/Loss



b) Placing Requests - Net Gain/Loss as a Percentage of Total Roll



c) Roll Versus Capacity - Percent Full



d) Rank Performance (Based on Number of S5 Higher Passes)

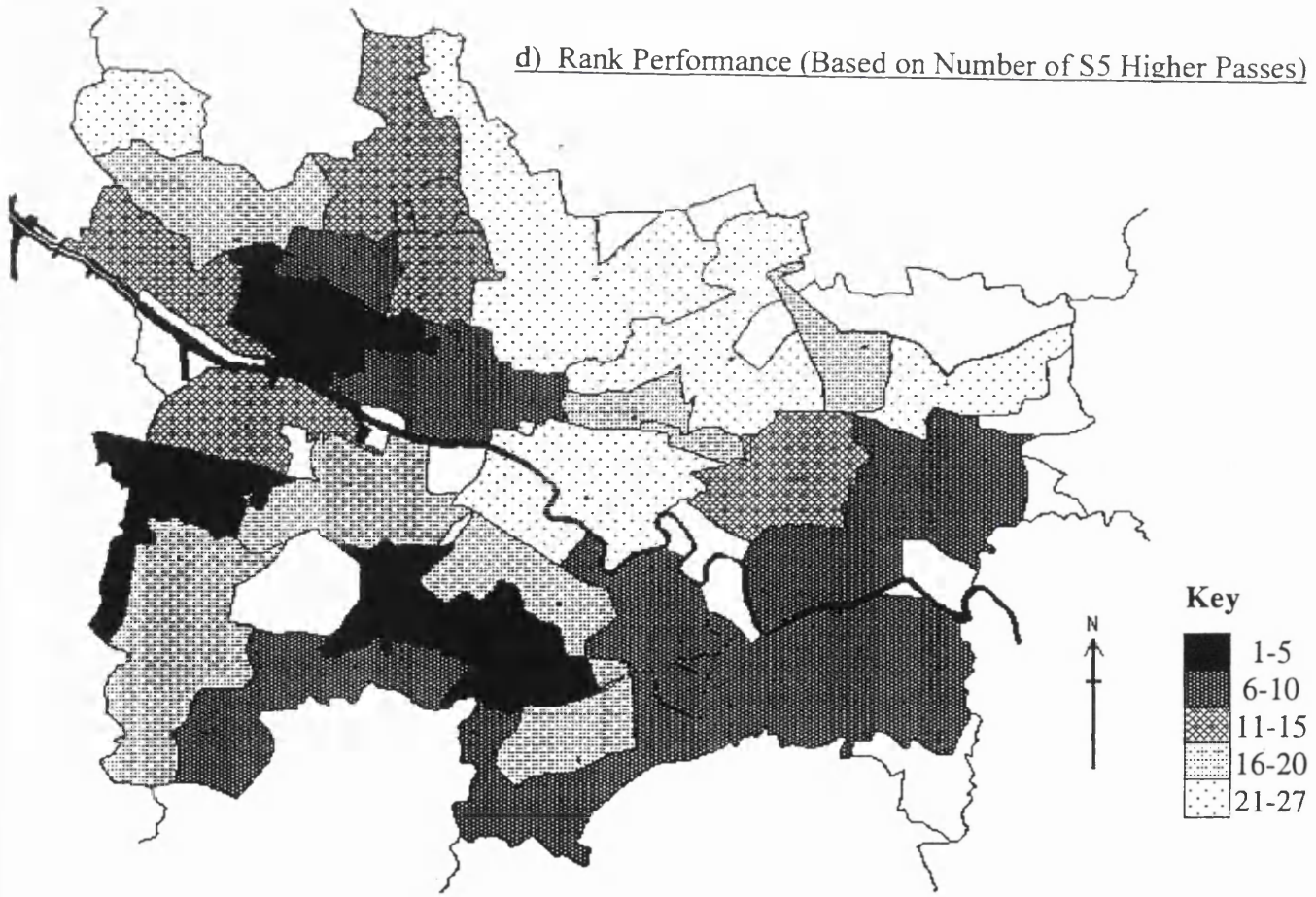


Figure 5.5 - School Hierarchy Categories

	TOP	MIDDLE	BOTTOM
Attainment	Above average (top quartile[16])	Average	Below Average (bottom quartile)
Roll v Capacity	>80%	50-80%	<50%
Placing Requests	Net gain (of c.5% or more)	Negligible	Net loss (of c.5% or more)
Catchment Characteristics	suburban, predominantly owner-occupied, large proportion of higher income parents, below average city unemployment, <10% deprived EDs[17]	suburban/inner city, mixed housing tenure, large proportion of middle income parents, around average unemployment[18], no affluent EDs, but few deprived ones	inner city/ peripheral schemes, largely public rented housing, predominantly lower income parents, significantly higher than average unemployment, >75% deprived EDs
% of Glasgow schools in each category[19]	25%	45%	30%
Selected Schools	Munro Cameron	Ross	Keith Frazer

Conclusion

This Chapter has detailed the specific research questions to be addressed, justified the focus of the work and explained the rationale behind the case study/sample selection and the methodology adopted. It has also attempted to define "locale" as a scale for analysis in this study and justified adoption of those particular locales selected for the case study through analysis of primary and secondary data.

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[16] Published attainment figures for 1991/92 and 1992/93

[17] Census Enumeration Districts

[18] c.19% (Glasgow City Council, 1997a)

[19] crude figure for indicative purposes only - note the original intention to include 2 schools from each category in the study sample

The specific case study involves analysis of the implications of change in Education management on the operation and power of the LEA, individual schools and the communities they serve. The perceptions of head teachers, school board parent members and parents themselves are sampled in an attempt to support or refute the initial conclusions drawn from the overview of the literature and analysis of secondary data. The picture is built up piece by piece through the following three chapters as analysis of the perceptions of each group is considered in turn. Chapter 9 outlines the findings and conclusions drawn in response to each of the socio-political and Education management research questions listed in Figure 5.1. Chapter 10 then discusses these findings as they relate to the socio-political geography of the city research questions detailed in Figure 5.4. The final chapter brings the main strands together, drawing conclusions as to the general implications of further changes in the nature of the tri-partite relationship in terms of production, consumption, power and accountability on individuals, communities and the overall geography of the city.

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Changes in the Tri-Partite Relationship Between Central Government, Local Government and Civil Society and its Implications for the Geography of the City:

The Effects of Developments in Public Education Management on School Catchments in the Glasgow Division of the Former Strathclyde Region 1990-96

PhD Thesis

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Chapter 6 - The Head Teacher Perspective

Against the background of the broader explanations of changes in the tri-partite relationship and the nature of public service provision, this Chapter concentrates on head teacher perceptions of the centrally and locally generated Education management initiatives discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The extent to which head teacher experience of the various initiatives compares with the policy intentions of central government and the former Regional Council is considered. These perceptions are used to inform more general conclusions as to both the appropriateness of change and its implications for the former Regional Council (as the LEA), individual schools and local communities. The extent to which the findings from this element of the field work support or refute the initial conclusions drawn from analysis of the literature are discussed in Chapter 9.

In an attempt to guage head teacher perceptions, twenty of the twenty six[1] non-denominational local authority secondary school head teachers in the Regional Council's Glasgow Division were interviewed. While head teacher attitudes may have been entrenched at a time of imposed change, they could equally have been in flux due to the scale of the challenges ahead. Either way, the findings are considered to be of substantial significance in informing the subsequent research conclusions.

[1] 6 head teachers indicated from the outset that they were not prepared to participate in the research due to time pressures.

The Role of the Head Teacher

The head teacher's role is an influential one in the activity of any school. The broad job description issued by the former Regional Council emphasises this by outlining a number of core strategic, operational and financial management responsibilities:

- to manage the affairs of the school to the benefit of the pupils and the wider community in compliance with statutory requirements regarding Education and the general duty of care owed to staff and pupils, including:
    - appointing and managing staff;
    - managing and developing the curriculum based on Council policy and best practice;
    - monitoring and communicating pupil progress to parents and maintaining discipline;
    - preparing and managing the school revenue and capital budgets; and
    - maintaining all necessary documentation and records;
- to formulate clear aims and objectives for the school;
- to communicate these aims and policies to all staff, pupils, parents and other users of the school;
- to act as principal professional advisor to the school board in line with the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988;
- to encourage and promote the development of the school ethos; and
- to undertake additional tasks for the Council, such as appraising other head teachers or participating in working groups.

Whilst the operational and financial management roles of the head teacher appear relatively straightforward, the strategic policy role is more complex. In devising and implementing a strategic development plan for the school, the head teacher is required to "foster among pupils, parents, staff and other users of the school an awareness of the school as a community with which they can all identify" (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1994). The development plans must reflect the core strategic objectives of the authority itself, covering key areas such as the Social Strategy values and goals (detailed in Chapter 4) and the Equal Opportunities Strategy. In addition, the head teacher must act as "the school's official correspondent with the authority itself and with interested groups such as other departments of the regional council, external agencies, SEB, SCOTVEC, other schools, parents and the wider community" (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1994). Inter-personal skills are also essential, with the head teacher required to "form and maintain effective working relationships with all users of the school and the school's staff, the office-bearers and members of the school board, other Educational establishments, officers of the authority and other departments of the regional council, representatives of the wider community, officers involved in the appraisal process and representatives of external agencies with rights to operate in relation to the school".

The strategic policy role therefore requires the skills of an advocate, arbitor, communicator and co-ordinator to supplement the basic policy planning experience necessary to formulate the development plan. When the operational and financial management responsibilities are added to this list, the role of the head teacher becomes extremely broad within each school. As a result, the head teacher becomes a key player in both the nature of Education management within the school and parental access to the decision-making process. As the individual responsible for

implementing policy in areas related to decentralisation and determining the organisational culture in each school, their attitudes, abilities and actions become significant variables in the success of central and local government polices themselves.

The head teacher therefore has a significant element of power, which s/he may or may not share with the school board. The nature of this power relationship is discussed at length by Deem *et al* (1995) who conclude from analysis of the English experience that although power rests predominantly in the hands of the head teacher, s/he does not have complete control over the operation of the governing body. Clegg (1989) makes similar assertions. Whilst Macbeth (1990) suggests that the majority of boards in Scotland exert less influence on the activity of head teachers than their English counterparts, it is nonetheless concluded that the head teacher/board relationship can facilitate or inhibit the extent to which change takes place within each school. This is discussed further in Chapter 7. At this time, it is important to note both the significance of the head teacher as a facilitator and/or gatekeeper of change and the potentially relevant part played by the school board in the change process (having a supportive, neutral or disruptive effect on the activity of the head teacher).

Methodological Issues

The head teacher interviews were the first in a three stage process of primary data collection on attitudes and experience of the following initiatives:

- parental choice
- budgetary devolution (DMR)
- grant maintained status (GMS)

- school boards
- general parental involvement/contact with the school
- other initiatives in Education management
- the nature and pace of change

The subsequent stages involved interviews/questionnaire responses from school board parent members and feedback from an extensive survey of parents' views at each of the study schools. These stages are covered in the proceding chapters. Attempts were made to check inter-group perceptions by asking each "tier" about their perceptions of the adequate operation of the other groups. It was intended that this area based analysis would reflect patterns of socio-spatial segregation within the city expressing themselves in parents' attitudes, actions, desire and ability to act in a participatory manner. The findings are built up through each of the following chapters prior to final conclusions on the socio-political and Education management elements of the case study being drawn in Chapter 9.

Two ideas were fundamental to the structure and procedure adopted for the fieldwork. Firstly, was the development of Bondi's (1988) and Gambetta's (1987) suggestion that there exists a hierarchy of schools within the LEA sector based on a number of criteria including attainment levels, roll, placing request levels, destination of school leavers and the broad socio-economic nature of the catchment. Following subjective assessment of these criteria, three broad categories were selected as the basis for analysis (these are detailed in Figure 5.5). Two schools were subsequently selected[1] from each of the three categories for detailed study (although one school from the middle category dropped out before the study could be completed[2]). Whilst

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[1] On the basis of the existence of a board, head teacher willingness/enthusiasm to participate and the desire to ensure a broad representation of schools from the breadth of different locales across the city.
[2] this school withdrew following completion of the first two stages of fieldwork - it was not possible to supplement the headteacher and board member comments with input from parents. The board

the placing of schools within the hierarchy was partly subjective, distinctions were apparent (on the basis of the criteria outlined in Figure 5.5) and proved useful for comparative purposes.

The second fundamental idea concerned the role of the head teacher and/or the school board as a local "driver" or "gatekeeper" of the change process within each school. The head teacher's role was considered to be particularly strong, with his/her attitudes, abilities and actions considered to be key factors in the "mobility" of a school within the hierarchy (either upwards or downwards) based on their tendency to innovate, comply or lag behind. As mentioned earlier, the head teacher was thus seen to be the key player in the processes of initiative implementation and parental participation at each school. The field work was intended to sample both the head teachers' attitude to the success of particular initiatives and guage their level of drive and enthusiasm. Although assessment of the latter is largely subjective, distinctions were apparent and subsequent conclusions drawn. It was hoped that a broad categorisation of head teacher drive would be apparent from the field work based on Stoker and Mossberger"s (1992) typology of local authorities. Head teachers could thus be categorised as "innovators", "compliers" or "laggards" based broadly on their place in the hierarchy.

Many of the head teachers volunteered comments on the basis that they would be non-attributable. To this end, the chapter concentrates on a general overview of perceptions from the twenty interviews. This is supplemented by quotes[1] from the head teachers from the specific study schools. Pseudonyms are used to maintain

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chairperson at the school had also agreed only to complete a questionnaire rather than participate in a formal interview. Based on these factors, anticipated disruption to the fieldwork timetable and the judgement that trends in the middle category were less salient than those at the top and bottom, it was decided to continue with only 5 study schools.

[1] Quotes have been selected either to emphasise consistently held perspectives or indicate particular exceptions to these.

anonymity. For indicative purposes, general distinctions have been made between deprived and more affluent catchments. To a small degree, the generalisations mask disparities between schools, although where these are significant the "affluent/deprived" distinction has been used.

A number of further methodological issues require consideration. Structured interviews were undertaken by three different researchers (including myself) using a set questionnaire to provide the necessary framework for analysis. Slight variations therefore existed in the style of interview based on the different characteristics and personalities of the interviewers. As a result, the extent to which the researchers were aware of the subject matter and train of thought behind the study also varied to a limited degree. In saying that, the formal structure offered by the questionnaire ensured considerable consistency of approach. A copy is attached as Appendix 6.1. The researchers were briefed in detail on the issues to be covered and the deliberately open nature of many of the questions. They prepared by considering the literature reviews compiled as part of the research and were briefed on the key expectations of the study as a whole. Although it could be argued that the very fact that it was not the research assistants' own study (or that they themselves had not compiled the questionnaire) may reduce the extent to which they probed the interviewees on specific topics or their responses to particular questions, it is felt that the approach adopted was the most beneficial, allowing a broader range of head teachers views to be gathered as a result of the increased number of interviews. Concerns were largely alleviated by the extensive preparation undertaken by the assistants and the ongoing liaison with the researcher.

Paradoxically, the formal layout of the questionnaire could have caused the interviewees some difficulties. The closed nature of certain questions resulted in the

absence of justification for some comments and little room for a proviso to certain answers (e.g. many of the opening questions requested a "yes", "no" or "don't know" answer). However, the cross referencing of questions helped reduce the problems caused by this. An explanation by the researcher and assistants that the questionnaire was solely a framework to ensure all areas of interest were covered helped further to remove the constraints some interviewees felt were placed on them by the formal nature of the questionnaire. Ambiguity over the meaning of certain questions on the questionnaire produced answers which, in a small minority of cases, seemed of little relevance to the direction of the study. It is significant that this confusion only arose with one or two of the seventy or so questions asked in each interview. Moreover, the ambiguities did not consistently relate to the same questions. Again, the effects on the validity of the study are regarded as negligible.

A problem outwith the control of the researchers was the lack of time available to head teachers. Ironically, many of the initiatives considered in the study were perceived to have contributed to an increase in head teacher workload above previous levels. The shortage of available time in some cases reduced the duration of the interview below the preferred one hour. In other cases it caused interviewee frustration at questions intended to cross-check previous responses. However, this was not the norm, with the majority of head teachers being keen to talk at length about the effects of the initiatives. Many felt the relevance of the subject matter to their current activity made them more willing to co-operate with the research than may otherwise have been the case. The situation was helped by the ability of the researchers to conduct the interviews at time which suited the head teachers rather than vice versa. A number of interviewees requested feedback once the analysis of responses was complete.

Any methodology has its shortfalls, resulting partly from the unique circumstances of the participants and partly from operational constraints. The response rate of 76.9% of those contacted to participate in the interview seemed more than satisfactory, especially bearing in mind the qualitative nature of the analysis. The responses received have provided substantial information to support or counter the arguments drawn from initial evaluation of the literature and have produced a valuable database of practitioner attitudes to both centrally and locally based policy initiatives. The following sections are laid out to reflect the order of the Education management issues discussed in Chapter 3. They are followed by an integrated assessment of the feedback in light of the initial conclusions drawn from analysis of the literature.

Parental Choice

Gambetta's (1987) suggestions in Chapter 2 that there are three explanations as to why choices are made - structuralist, "pushed from behind" or "pulled from the front" - seems to be borne out from the experience of head teachers in specific schools. It would appear that each of these may be a factor in every choice, although the importance of each will vary from one choice to another. The vast majority of respondents supported the assertions of David *et al* (1994) (see Figure 3.4) and Regional Council officials[1], indicating that parental perception of a school was a far more important factor in explaining choice than the reality of different experiences from one establishment to another. Both David *et al* and the many of the head teachers argued that such perceptions did not reflect the reality of actual experience

[1] Interviewed at Regional HQ and Divisional levels

within the school[1]. In line with David *et al*'s (1994) findings, the most significant pull factors appeared to be a good disciplinary record, high levels of attainment, a positive reputation (including a good school ethos, the wearing of uniforms, and an approachable environment) and good facilities. Social factors were also seen as being significant, with the socio-economic make up of the school's catchment affecting its desirability. Interestingly, this was seen as a stronger "push" factor than "pull" factor, perhaps indicating the desire of parents in more deprived areas to remove their children from what they perceive to be an unsuitable local environment. This emphasises concerns about the effects such decisions have on community cohesion in specific localities experiencing higher levels of deprivation. It also counters the findings of Macbeth *et al* (1986) and Raab and Adler (1988), who were quoted in Chapter 3 as arguing that social factors were of limited importance in the choice process.

It is difficult to argue that there is no basis for parental perception of the situation in many schools. Indeed, the perceived existence of a school hierarchy suggests that there may be some justification for many of the decisions, although head teacher frustration in schools experiencing a net loss is understandable. Moreover, despite a lack of perception amongst head teachers of competition between schools, it could be concluded that a combination of push factors from one school and pull factors from another may heavily inform parents'decisions. A number of real and perceived factors, not wholly unrelated to a school's place in the notional hierarchy, appear to play a significant role in the decisions of many parents.

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[1] This could only be easily checked for attainment levels, where perceptions *did* appear to be close to reality. Nonetheless, head teachers argued that it was a mix of push and pull factors which which explained the scale and reasons for placing requests rather than a single variable. Many of these other variables - discipline, ethos, environment - were difficult to measure.

Each of the five study schools' head teachers concurred with the general opinion that perception was perhaps more important than reality when it comes to making placing requests. The difference in issues seen to be of greatest importance to parents by head teachers in the top category of the hierarchy was of particular interest. The head teacher at Cameron listed "sound Education provision, exam performance in external exams and the school ethos" as key factors; whereas the head teacher at Munro emphasised the school "being good, caring and one where their children can do as well as they will anywhere else". Whilst he further pointed out that good discipline, staff/pupil relations and exam results were important, it was also essential that "the school is seen as approachable so that parents can discuss pupil needs and outcomes and be taken seriously".

In the bottom category, Keith and Frazer had lost a large number of pupils through placing requests to other schools. The head teacher at Keith pointed out that "erroneous perceptions" were the main reasons for this loss; whereas at Frazer, "decisions are made by parents for their own reasons ... often more to do with parental perception of social factors than the Educational experience in school".

Particularly distinctive comments were made by the head teacher at Ross. He indicated that placing requests were largely determined by "league tables and preconceived opinion", but indicated that "we have written to parents asking why they send their children elsewhere and some have said "because his/her pals are going there". It is a pathetic reason really. Some also said it was because a sibling had gone to another school, but if they had to make the decision again they would have come here".

cont./

Territorial factors were also specifically emphasised at Frazer where the loss of pupils seemed to be partially related to the locality of the school within the catchment. The head teacher pointed out that the school "is right at the edge of the catchment and there are two other, more middle-class schools nearby. They are closer to parts of our catchment than we are".

It was interesting to note that the two schools from the top category viewed attributes of their schools as being the main pull factor in attracting pupils. The other schools tended to quote erroneous parent perception rather than their assessment of realities as the main factor pushing pupils away.

Perhaps of greater interest to the geographer is the important effect of territorial factors, school location and public transport links on parental choice (as suggested in the CERI Report (1994) findings and by David *et al* (1994) in Chapter 3). There was a noted tendency in some areas for pupils to prefer to attend schools in what they see as being their own "territory". Several respondents indicated that non-denominational pupils often opted to attend the local denominational school rather than move outwith the area. This appeared to be a more common factor in the more deprived areas, perhaps partially explained by the cost of travel outwith the local catchment and distance to the nearest alternative non-denominational school (which offered a sufficiently different socio-economic experience to attract pupils in the first place). Nonetheless, some head teachers felt that definite territorial allegiances existed in some areas (predominantly in deprived areas) and that there were boundaries across which pupils (or their parents) were not keen to cross. This adds an additional strand to Gambetta's (1987) structuralist explanation, suggesting that choice is not only restricted by the lack of adequate supply-side deregulation, but also that it is constrained by feelings of territoriality, distance between schools and the cost of

public transport (as a proportion of the total expenditure of low income families). This perhaps explains the importance of "proximity" as a factor in David *et al*'s (1996) summary. As one head teacher pointed out, "if the Government was really committed to the idea of parental choice, it would give every child in the city a free bus pass". Despite this being both a facetious comment and an impractical step to take, it nonetheless indicates the extent to which head teachers perceive territorial and geographical factors to be important in affecting school choice. Indeed, seven out of the twenty respondents indicated it was a significant variable in parental choice decisions.

With regard to "push factors", similar variables were considered to be important. Again, "perception" of issues was deemed to be critical. Although attainment levels were seen by most head teachers to be significant factors in shaping perception, only one respondent stated that a "poor quality of teaching" was a variable which pushed pupils away from schools. Whilst it is likely that many parents fail to make a distinction between the two points, this comment again points to the difficulties faced by schools in attempting to alter the overall levels of attainment in the locality through specific teaching standards/methods. The links between socio-economic background and attainment were emphasised by Macbeath (1992) in Chapter 3.

Gaining and losing pupils was consistently seen to be problematic in attempting to maintain attainment levels. The attraction of a large number of placing requests was considered to have a detrimental effect on attainment levels as standards are "watered down" by "poorer" pupils from elswhere. Likewise, a school losing a large number of pupils was perceived to experience a similar drop in overall attainment as the more promising pupils opted for better schools. This reflected the

trend highlighted by Gewirtz *et al* (1995) in Chapter 3. The educational ability of the individual pupils arriving or leaving was obviously a factor in the extent of this phenomenon, as was the base level of attainment of the receiving/losing school. Generally speaking, respondents felt that it was often (if not always) the most motivated pupils who left schools, thus pulling down levels. As one head teacher pointed out, "the (losing) school is left with an "iceberg" profile, with only a few pupils with above average attainment levels".

There appeared to be a "stepped" effect of "more able" pupils at each school moving up the school hierarchy to exploit perceived better opportunities elsewhere. This evolutionary movement through the hierarchy appeared to be a phenomenon considered common to all areas, although it may be constrained in certain areas by the shortage of alternative schools. Regardless, such trends would appear to support Bondi (1988) and Gambetta's (1987) assertions that a hierarchy of schools has developed within LEAs and that mobility between categories in the hierarchy is most easily exploited by those with higher levels of awareness and understanding of the market (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995).

Contrary to the main thrust of responses, two particular quotes regarding attainment and placing requests seem worth noting. One head teacher from a deprived area in the lowest category of schools suggested that the effect on receiving schools "must be positive due to the motivation apparent in parents and pupils who make such requests - the positive impact on the ethos of the school is bound to enhance performance". This supports Gewirtz *et al*'s (1995) argument about the motivation and background of placing request applicants, but also largely reflects the specific experience of schools in the lowest category. The particular head teacher's opinion was not shared further up the hierarchy. However, it is worth considering as a

supplement to the somewhat dogmatic suggestion that the "quality of pupils arriving at a school will often be poorer than the status quo, thus reducing attainment".

With regard to the effect of incoming placing requests on attainment, it was interesting to note that the two schools in the top category suggested that the effect of incoming pupils would be negative as a result of the lower academic ability of the incoming pupils. A similar indication was given by the Ross head teacher. However, this experience was not shared by schools in the bottom category, with Frazer's head teacher indicating that the effect would be positive due to the low standards at that school. Keith's head teacher suggested that incoming pupils were usually mixed in terms of ability, resulting in little overall effect. It was interesting to note the comment made by the head teacher at Munro that despite an overall negative effect, the school itself had a positive effect on these incoming pupils because of their lower than average attainment levels. However, many of the existing parents in the catchment had been upset by the influx of "terrible kids" from elsewhere.

The second interesting quote related to the geographical extent of the catchment and the variety of distinct socio-economic areas from which the school draw pupils. The respondent suggested that "the broadness of our catchment area leads to ambiguity about the overall outcome of placing requests". It is possible that such a scenario is only a factor in certain catchments with varied socio-economic make up. However, it does emphasise the extent to which generalisations mask a very complex range of causes and effects, with no consistent causal link between them.

The structuralist viewpoint identified by Gambetta (1987) suggests that there are constraints placed on parents/pupils by the lack of diversity of Educational

experiences. Chapter 3 highlighted widespread scepticism amongst some academics as to the extent of choice actually avialable to parents (especially to less socially and physically mobile groups). Nonetheless, despite geographical and associated transport cost factors constraining geographically remote or less affluent sections of the community, head teachers (including all of those in the selected study schools) generally felt there was a sufficient range of options to choose from. In short, a market (or pseudo-market) was seen to exist. This may in part reflect a perception of the "uniqueness" of each head teacher's own school. Regardless, one respondent argued, "the independent sector is big enough for those who wish to take advantage of it; there is no desire to opt out and there is a sufficient range of experiences within the local authority sector". Another stated that "parents are mostly interested in a middle of the road, mainstream Educational experience", perhaps querying the existence of a true market and suggesting that parents are not demanding of a range of distinct choices. Indeed, some head teachers indicated that parents did not research a broad range of alternatives when considering making a placing request. The choice seemed to be between the catchment school and either the next closest one or the closest magnet school. This largely ties in with the findings of Macbeth (1989) and the CERI Report (1994). The responses also partly question Baron's (1981) assertion that there is insufficient information for parents to make informed choices. It would appear that head teachers regularly perceive that it is the parents' failure or unwillingness to access the available information that proves more significant. In short, there appears to be a substantial level of ignorance on the part of parents as to the choices available to them.

It initially appears inaccurate to assert that any tangible post-Fordist supply side deregulation of public Education production has occurred, manifesting itself in a range of real choices of experience (and provider) for the service consumer. Whilst an

exception to the generally held view, one head teacher pointed out that there was virtually no real choice of Educational experience as "the curriculum will be the same regardless of the school". This would appear partly to be the case at first glance. However, choice is not just based on curricular issues; a range of other factors (such as discipline and teaching quality) will shape the experience at each school. There would thus be evidence to suggest that, despite the limits of grant maintained staus in Scotland, a form of diversification has occurred, further supported by the devolution of control to the individual establishment. This may support the references to "flawed post-Fordism" highlighted by Jessop (1992b). Jessop argues that as a generalisation, public services cannot be said to have displayed either Fordist or post-Fordist patterns of production, or that their had been either mass consumption of services or extensive choice available to consumers. His definition points to the *concepts* of Fordism and post-Fordism being "flawed" in their general application to public services, rather than an adopted Fordist or post-Fordist *approach* being "flawed" in its application.

On the other hand, the satisfaction of parents with the status quo and the range of choices available may reflect confidence in the current system (or even apathy or lack of knowledge, as Baron (1981) suggested) rather than the existence of a broad range of suitable alternatives from which they can pick and choose. This interpretation would, of course, question the very need for a range of experiences. In short, should user satisfaction remove the need for diversification? Are there perhaps psychological constraints on parents and pupils which engender a feeling of satisfaction with the status quo or a lack of desire for alternatives? This would appear to support the assertions of Woods *et al* (1995) in Chapter 3 that many parents lack the sophistication to create the demand for change. Indeed, the CERI Report's (1994) overview of the current Education system in the context of a European comparison

points to shortcomings in the existing arrangements in many EU countries in the face of a lack of demand-led diversification. Significantly, it also points to the inadequacies of the market as a mechanism for ensuring improvement in Educational standards.

To conclude, it would appear that the majority of head teachers favour the principle of parental choice, but (not unnaturally) are concerned about the effects of placing requests on their own schools. They consider perception to be a more significant push and pull factor than reality. Nonetheless, they acknowledge that a pseudo-market of Educational experiences exists within the state sector, with more motivated parents best placed to exploit the opportunities available from choice. Finally, the proximity of suitable alternative schools is perceived to be a significant factor affecting the choices available in some locales (especially where low income may make transport costs appear excessive).

Delegated Management of Resources (DMR)

The Delegated Management of Resources (DMR) scheme was Strathclyde Region's version of the Scottish Office Devolved School Management (DSM) initiative. Details of the scheme are outlined in Figure 4.6. Briefly, it involves devolution of 80% of each school's budget to the head teacher, with specific spending priorities therefore being determined at a local level. The school board must be consulted prior to the final school budget for the year being agreed.

Although seven of the respondents pointed out that at the time of the survey their schools were not yet on the full DMR scheme (but were operating on a "direct

purchasing" transitional scheme), all but one of the twenty interviewed felt that it had been the most significant of the decentralisation initiatives introduced by the Regional Council in Education. A similar number felt that the devolution of decisions about school expenditure is a good thing in principle and in practice (quoting many of the benefits summarised by Marren and Levacic (1994) in Chapter 3).

All of the study schools indicated that DMR has been a positive development. Whilst Munro and Ross had just gone on to the scheme at the time of interview, they had noticed real benefits in the direct purchasing scheme in operation as a forerunner. The head teacher at Ross pointed out that "I think it will probably be the most important decentralisation initiative in that Education is financially driven at the moment". Some initial concerns did exist. The head teacher at Cameron sighted that lack of familiarity with the systems and procedures, although he perceived that it was still too early to comment in any detail. At Munro, concerns arose about the lack of time to deal with the increased workload. However, the head teacher did point out that the training had been "very good to date". This was countered at Frazer, where the head teacher pointed out that there had been a lack of adequate training, and when it had taken place it had impinged on the time of office staff. He generally felt the training had not been made available early enough. Despite that, he was most positive about the benefits to date, pointing out that DMR had allowed him to target specific projects at his chosen pace.

Despite overwhelming support, there were some concerns about the operation of DMR. One respondent pointed out that "there is much duplication in DMR work done by the centre and the school. There is more paperwork than I feel is necessary and the internal auditors are anxious because we do not apply accounting practices as

rigorously as they would. The centre must learn to trust the school." To be fair, DMR was at a fairly early stage in its development at the time of the interview and it is perhaps not surprising that central concerns existed as to how schools would rise to the challenge of budgetary responsibility. Further concerns existed about the rigidity of the funding formulae, with the per capita allocation of PE budgets in particular perceived as failing to reflect local circumstances. Despite this, DMR has avoided much of the criticism attracted by the LMS scheme for similar restrictive formulae. The Regional Council also attempted to iron out these initial difficulties as the scheme was refined and developed (e.g. by simplifying the inter-cost centre virement arrangements).

The main problems experienced by head teachers would appear to be lack of time to properly implement the scheme and insufficient training given by the LEA (this appearing to be more of a problem for more recent additions to the scheme). With regard to the pressure on time, it is hoped that the appointment of an Administration and Finance Assistant (AFA) in each school will be a major assistance to the head teacher. These individuals are trained in accountancy and budgetary control, and are intended to alleviate the pressure on the head teacher. Despite this, the majority of respondents indicated that their role had changed since the inception of DMR. The most common response was that there had been a significant increase in head teacher responsibilities as a result of DMR. It was perceived that this had been accompanied by increased fiscal and managerial accountability in line with the intentions of the scheme. This resulted from the greater responsibility for budgetary monitoring and the increased scope for project planning facilitated by the new regime.

Head teachers felt there would be a number of knock-on effects for pupils and parents as a result of DMR. Of greatest benefit was the more effective use of

resources through the enhanced targeting of specific local priorities. Even in the early stages, there had been an increase in expenditure on classroom equipment and the fabric of the school, boosting staff and pupil morale in the short term. Budgetary control was also seen as giving the school a greater ability to respond more quickly to local circumstances.

In the study schools, only the head teachers in the top category indicated a significant change in role to date. The head teacher at Cameron simply pointed out that DMR had "increased my accountability, but I welcome this". At Munro, the head teacher had "thought more carefully about the devolution of responsibility to my own promoted staff and considered the question of my own accountability in more detail". However, he pointed out that he had "no intention to go down the road towards becoming a Chief Executive of the school rather than a head teacher". Other head teachers simply pointed to an increased time spent on financial matters and the benefits of the school being in more control than it was in the past.

Whilst only one head teacher indicated his job had become more complicated, others stated that their role was more managerially oriented than before and that they had had to consider delegation of activities to senior staff in order to cope with the additional work. Two respondents indicated that they now thought more commercially, whilst another suggested he was turning into "a clerk of works for the school building". One head teacher who had strongly welcomed the initiative pointed out that, "my own role has changed even without DMR due to the range of central and local government initiatives on other issues. There has been more paperwork and school policy work ... Each of my depute's role has become more important and I

have found myself acting like a Chief Executive with a team of advisors around me". It is worth noting that a quarter of respondents indicated that their role had not changed significantly. The point about the changing roles and expectations of head teachers is an important one. The head teacher job description points to the general changes in expectations of managers across the public sector in the last 20 years, with less emphasis on technical ability and a growing focus on key managerial skills such as planning, monitoring and review.

Head teachers in the study schools indicated a number of benefits for pupils and parents resulting from the decentralisation initiatives. At Cameron, the head teacher stated that as a result of DMR, "we will hopefully be able to increase IT provision within the school and be able to take a more serious look at staffing in an attempt to improve our services". Similarly, at Munro the head teacher felt that "parents and pupils will get better services, will be better resourced and the resources they get will be more specifically targeted at their needs. The head teacher at Ross indicated that the changes would lead to "more relevant decisions taken at the local level; with a quicker response to local needs and an increased feeling of involvement". At Frazer, the head teacher felt that the benefits would depend on how the money is spent but that (generally) facilities and classrooms were likely to improve. Pupils were formally consulted on how money should be spent and parents are likely to notice the benefits through knock-on effects. He indicated that morale was likely to be enhanced as a result of the changes. At Keith, one of the key benefits would be "an enhanced school environment resulting from our ability to respond more quickly and more directly. There will also be indirect benefits from increased staff morale, leading to a better learning experience".

Most respondents indicated that their expectations about the benefits of DMR had been justified. Certainly, there had been a number of concerns prior to the extension of the scheme. These included worries about the scale and complexity of the scheme, insufficient training and a general fear of the unknown. Other head teachers were attracted by the concept, being keen to see if schools could administer their budgets better than the centre. This could be done within the overarching principle of a local comprehensive Education system and the broad policies and strategies laid down by the Regional Council. One respondent stated that "having worked for the authority for many years I was aware of the culture of the organisation and assimilated to their values and ideas".

To conclude, DMR was perceived by head teachers to have been a valuable development by the Regional Council, with few of the anticipated difficulties proving to be significant. Ongoing concerns exist about the workload of head teachers, the training programmes in place and the inflexibility of budgetary formulae. However, four respondents specifically argued that the scheme allows the school to offer an enhanced Educational experience, although they failed to enlarge on how this might be achieved. Certainly, the direct and knock-on effects of more locally relevant and accountable decision-making would appear to create an environment more conducive to learning. Furthermore, the ability to increase parent understanding of spending decisions and local priorities is likely to be of benefit to both the parents and the school. However, DMR has not been introduced in a vacuum. The volume of new initiatives being introduced on the Education side (e.g. the 5-14 scheme, Curriculum Structure for Secondary Stages and Higher Still), the effects of placing requests and a broad reduction in local authority capital spending were all considered to pose particular challenges to schools where resources were scarce and rolls were falling.

Grant Maintained Status (GMS)

In line with the general political, public and professional opposition in Scotland to opting out, there was little support among head teachers for the attainment of GMS for their school. Only one respondent foresaw any possibility of his school opting out, and this only because of a concern over the future of their school (and the Education service in general) after Local Government Reorganisation. Their stance seems to reflect the broad affinity in Scottish civil society towards public Education and the concerns of the effects of opting out on both the comprehensive system and the teaching profession. Twelve respondents said they saw no benefits whatsoever in the attainment by schools of GMS, with the one head teacher who had been involved in a ballot admitting it was used solely as a tactic to delay closures. Of those who did identify benefits, the most common attractions appeared to be the greater budgetary autonomy after opting out and the initial financial inducements.

A further potential benefit was perceived to be the freedom from the bureaucratic constraints currently placed on schools by the LEA. However, one respondent suggested that, "although we might feel we'd have more control, government constraints would replace Regional ones". It is debatable whether or not this would be the case. The experience in England points to more discretion for head teachers in grant maintained schools, although stronger governing bodies and the scrutiny of the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS)[1] do impose similar constraints on local autonomy as those perceived by head teachers to come from school boards and the LEA (Deem *et al*, 1995). The issue of accountability is particularly important. Whilst some respondents suggested that this would be undermined by the removal of

[1] The "quango" body responsible for funding GMS schools in England

schools from democratic control, there would appear to be limited reduction in the managerial and fiscal accountability of the head teacher, with the democratic accountability of each establishment being maintained (at approximately its current level) through the establishment of a governing body. However, the loss of democratic control over the local Education "system" would appear to suffer where a number of schools opted out and redistributive capacity was undermined (Gasson, 1992; Fitz *et al*, 1993).

Whilst none of the study schools' head teachers indicated that their school was likely to consider opting out in the foreseeable future, they did indicate some advantages. Both Cameron and Keith's head teachers indicated benefits arising from greater control over budgets and initial financial inducements from Central Government. The head teacher at Munro pointed to a "potential reduction in political interference, although this had largely been achieved within the Local Government sector by the devolution of decisions to school level. Sometimes we have to dance to a Local Government tune when we don't necessarily think it a very good one. However, we would no doubt simply change one set of masters for another".

The loss of support services from the Region and the need to buy in services from elsewhere would go some way towards reducing the extent of any increased discretion or autonomy apparent in a "more independent status". Indeed, sixteen respondents held the loss of adequate support from the LEA as being the most significant disadvantage of opting out. This again seems to have been a concern south of the Border, with many GMS schools opting to purchase support services from the LEA in the absence of alternative cost-effective providers (Gasson, 1992). Some

shools have grouped together to pool support, adopting similar arrangements to those established by Further Education Colleges following their removal from LEA control (Deem *et al*, 1995).

Furthermore, several head teachers indicated the danger of a real decline in staff morale following any such moves. Whilst not wholly justifiable on the basis of the English experience, staff were seen as potentially losing their place on the LEA career ladder as well as being susceptible to alterations in terms and conditions after opting out. Further problems related to perceptions that investment would reduce after initial financial incentives, that strategic planning and the ability to meet local needs through redistributive practices would be undermined by the loss of the LEA and that there would be an overall decline in service standards. The threat to the redistributive capacity of the LEA would seem to be the most justifiable concern based on subsequent analysis of the budgetary and performance reality of GMS in schools in England. A number of head teachers felt that the development of GMS detracted from the broad concepts of comprehensive Education, leading to an increase in existing inequalities between different areas. Two respondents specifically mentioned their concerns that schools in deprived areas would experience *de facto* discrimination under Conservative controlled central government (and presumably any government pursuing similar policies).

Of particular note was one respondent's lack of faith in the Government's ability to run the Education service as effectively as the LEA. This is of particular interest in light of a broadly forecast removal of Education in Scotland from LEA to Scottish Parliament control. Anecdotal evidence suggests an element of professional support for such moves amongst Educationalists in Scotland; a view not shared by many local elected members, keen to retain autonomy and control over the single

largest block of local authoriuty revenue expenditure. They no doubt also acknowledge the prestige and political leverage of control of Education in the face of centrally imposed fiscal constraints on local government - a point not lost to the Scottish Office in their ringfencing of additional resources for Education in the 1998/99 budget settlement.

From an ideological perspective, it was interesting to consider that only two respondents agreed with the public choice oriented statement that "the increase in the range of Education providers resulting from opting out will enhance the quality of Education as a whole. Fourteen of the twenty practitioners questioned either strongly disagreed (5) or disagreed (9) with this statement, supporting the majority feeling that there were few benefits in grant maintained status and again questioning the need for further supply-side diversification (outwith that facilitated by parental choice and DMR) to meet parent demands.

School Boards

As discussed in Chapter 3, school boards have been established as the main formal channel for ensuring head teacher accountability to parents and facilitating parental involvement in Education decision-making. Head teachers largely welcomed the development of boards and the formalisation they offered. There was a feeling that the involvement of parents had been beneficial to the management of schools, partly as a result of their place in the service provider/consumer relationship and partly because, in some cases, of the expertise they brought in from their own vocations. One respondent indicated that a further benefit arose from the fact that "parents have more freedom than employees to speak their minds on the Region's policies". Whilst

not a broadly expressed view it does illustrate the extent to which the boards can assist the head teacher in his/her liaison with other bodies on behalf of the school.

Despite the benefits of parental involvement and the general support for the principle of school boards, many head teachers felt that the boards in their current form were an inappropriate vehicle for enhancing parental input and were thus not functioning as intended. Many felt that they had been fairly unsuccessful when it came to considering "the type of grandiose projects which were anticipated". One respondent stated that "the structure is too confusing and the boards' roles are not well enough defined", whilst another pointed out that "there are so many areas in which they are not allowed to get involved".

In saying that, many respondents indicated that the school was more accountable to parents as a result of boards. Not only do they force the school to be more responsive to parental demands, but they also act as a check on the activity of the head teacher - particularly in the budgetary process, where boards must be consulted in detail before budgets are set. This accountability was seen to exist despite the fact that the vast majority of head teachers perceived that board members' backgrounds only partially reflected the socio-economic characteristics of the catchments they represented. This was a point emphasised as significant by Macbeth (1990). Whilst, the elements of the fieldwork examining particular boards supported the assertion, there are difficulties in drawing any causal links between the representative nature of board members and their subsequent accountability to the parent body. The issue does not appear to be significant unless board members are insensitive to the needs of particular groups within the broad parent body.

There is also the possibility that whilst the head teacher feels accountable to the board, accountability to the parental body as a whole is not strengthened. This in

turn queries the relationship between the head teacher, the board and parents. In short, there appears to be a very fragmented chain of head teacher accountability to parents via the board, which itself generally appears to be only partially representative of parents. This supports the arguments of Munn (1990), Macbeth (1990), Bogdanowicz (1994) and Kogan (1995) that head teacher and board accountability to the broader parent body is extremely limited. Indeed, according to Bogdanowicz (1994), the illusion of head teacher accountability to the board may actually undermine a broader sense of responsibility to the parent body as a whole. As a result, boards may in fact act as a hurdle to parent involvement rather than a vehicle for it. Their existence can often satisfy or appease concerns about parental involvement whilst in reality the board may act as a gate keeper to the broader views of parents.

Despite concerns about the remit and operation of school boards, the majority of respondents felt that parents were adequately represented by them and PTA's. All five study schools' head teachers indicated their satisfaction with the existing system, although Ross suggested that "there is a large percentage of parents who don't really want to be represented; they won't bother me unless I give them hassle". This again raises questions about head teacher expectations of the role and functioning of boards and the (lack of) proactive attempts by at least some to promote strengthened accountability. However, there were some perceived benefits. One respondent felt that the key benefit of such bodies was that "they can ask questions that aren't raised in other forums". General concerns did exist about the extent of representation, with an insufficient number of parents becoming involved, and "less well-off parents being particularly under-represented". Some felt that the issues dealt with by these bodies were too broad and poorly defined for them to be successful.

All of the five study schools welcomed the development of School Boards. The head teacher at Cameron pointed out that "it is beneficial to involve parents in decisions which affect the management of the school. It is also useful to development parent interest in school issues over and above fund raising. Moreover, the school has benefited from outside expertise from other disciplines/vocations". Munro's head teacher pointed out that they gave "a structure to an already apparent parent interest" and although "there are problems with their structure and operation" they provided useful checks on the head teacher's activity. The head teacher at Ross pointed out that "anything which makes for greater parental involvement can only benefit a school".

Their feelings were shared at the schools from the bottom category with the head teacher at Keith pointing out that they were a useful means of gauging parental opinion - at least one group of parents - and they act as a channel for communications with the school". The head teacher at Frazer was a little more reticent, pointing out that working with the Board can be time consuming, and that parents are reluctant to stand for the Board. However, he went on to say that "anything that will help teachers and parents to work together has to be beneficial".

Initial consideration would appear to suggest that head teachers feel that boards have at least partially attained the Scottish Office (1989a) objective of establishing "much closer links between schools and parents and giving parents a greater say in the running of schools". However, this should perhaps be qualified by saying that through the establishment of boards, schools have involved some rather than all (or even a majority of) parents. Even with this in mind, "involvement" has been minimal, largely expressed through any influence exerted on the head teacher by members of

the board or the PTA. The extent of this involvement will be examined further in Chapters 7 and 8. In addition, the situation varies from school to school, with three of the twenty respondents pointing out that their schools currently had no board. On each occasion, this was a result of the absence of sufficient parent volunteers to take up positions. Each of the three schools fell into the bottom category of the hierarchy outlined in Figure 5.5. This points to real problems with parent involvement and the accountability of head teachers in some areas. Based on the head teacher responses, it is questionable whether the development of boards has achieved the second Scottish Office (1989b) objective outlined in Chapter 2 of "encouraging local communities to co-operate with schools in the Education of their children and providing a means for the expression of parents' interests and views". Boards would appear to be more a school voice in the community than a community voice in the school. Clearly, their success is debatable.

Macbeth's (1990) identification of school board aims was considered to provide a useful framework for considering their subsequent performance. He suggests that these aims are to enhance the Educational welfare of the children, the efficient management of the school, and the facilitation of local democracy. Although the extent to which boards will satisfy these aims varies between schools due to a range of factors (including the drive of the board members, the dominant or otherwise personality of the head teacher and the holding of school board elections), the general feeling among head teachers suggest all three aims are not being adequately satisfied. Firstly, the range of board activities in most schools would not appear to take a holistic strategic approach to the Educational welfare of the children. Certainly, specific initiatives have been undertaken, but these are predominantly perceived by head teachers to have been driven by them rather than board initiated.

Secondly, the efficient management of the school would again appear to be more of a task for the staff than the board (especially considering the head teacher job description). Eight of the twenty respondents perceived that the board had *no* involvement in the day to day running of the school, whilst a further eleven (including the five study schools) said their involvement was marginal. Two of the respondents did indicate that they felt a more strategic approach had been adopted by the board, but again this was the exception rather than the rule. Certainly, their vetting of head teacher activity, especially on budgetary matters, does produce an essential check (enhancing the accountability of the head teacher) but this role appears minimal with key operational decisions in most schools being left to staff. Furthermore, board members appear to respect the opinions or experience of staff almost always, or at least on the vast majority of occasions. In one school, for example, the head teacher pointed out that "the school board has stated that it will abide by the opinions of the professionals on all curricular matters". In saying that, the situation appears to vary between schools depending on the nature and make-up of the boards, and it would be incorrect to presume head teachers have *carte blanche* to do as they please. As one respondent stated, "teacher views are respected, but not always accepted - and certainly not accepted blindly".

Finally, the extent to which boards facilitate local democracy is highly debatable. As outlined in Table 3.1a, only around 32% of secondary schools in Strathclyde have run elections since 1992; insufficient parents coming forward to necessitate competition for the few places available. Three schools have had to dismantle their boards due to lack of parental interest - two of these in schools where the head teacher felt the previous board had been fairly effective. Moreover, where elections are held, it is questionable whether the turnout is sufficient to justify plaudits

for the strength of the local democratic process (Munn, 1990). Chapter 7 looks more closely at the operation of boards from the perspective of parent members. The comments from head teachers suggest that boards appear predominantly to fall into the categories of "suggestive" and "mediating" bodies outlined by Macbeth (1990) in Chapter 3, trusting in the professionalism of staff and acting as intermediaries between school and LEA.

Sixteen of the twenty respondents (including all five study schools) stated that their boards had lobbied the Regional Council on behalf of the school, often in support of issues raised by the head teacher, but also on other topics such as the fabric of the school building and the threat to the future of the school as a result of the Region's rationalisation programme. There was less of a tendency for boards to lobby other bodies (such as the District Council, other Regional departments, the local enterprise company or central government) as representatives of their local communities. None of the five study schools' boards had acted in this manner. The response by three of the boards to Central Government consultation exercises indicates that some boards do pro-actively take a broader interest in general Educational issues. In each of these schools the head teacher was encouraging of such activity and contributed to the board's response. Despite the limited extent of individual lobbying, the Scottish School Board Association has regularly urged its members to speak out on a range of issues (e.g. the impact of longterm funding cuts on the Education system (The Herald, 24 January 1996, p.8)). Whether this call from the parent body will subsequently result in a change of operation in the medium to long term is highly debatable in light of the falling number of boards. However, the findings do suggest that boards are willing to participate in the relationship between the school and the LEA, even if they

are doing so with a particularly strong democratic mandate from the broader parent body in each locale.

There would appear to be a degree of overlap in the activity and representation of boards and PTA's. Eight head teachers stated that the PTA was now defunct, but where they were operational they tend to work hand in hand with the board on issues ranging from fund-raising to broader Educational initiatives. The head teacher appears in most cases to fulfil his/her role as the catalyst in the three way relationship between staff, board and PTA. However, it is questionable whether a synergy has been created due to the joint activities of board and PTA. One head teacher pointed out that "the PTA has declined since the inception of the school board due to the large overlap between their activities". Another suggested that "parents tend to graduate from the PTA to the board as they become more confident". The more detailed analysis of board activity (discussed in Chapter 7) points to this being the case.

To conclude, many of the head teachers welcomed the development of boards as a formal channel to parental involvement. However, concerns did exist about their remit, the extent to which parent members were representative of the broader community and the performance of boards in achieving their prescribed aims. Further concerns were confirmed about their accountability to the broader parent body and their reliance on the experience of school professionals to make many key decisions.

Parental Involvement - Some General Comments

As outlined above, head teachers undoubtedly welcomed parental involvement in Educational decision-making, even where concerns were expressed about the adequacy of existing channels. However, there appeared a general frustration at the

lack of parental interest over and above the welfare of their own child(ren). When asked to rank the reasons for this, the majority of respondents cited apathy as the main reason for lack of parental involvement, although satisfaction with the work of the school and existing communication channels was a close second. Lack of parental knowledge on how to become involved was regularly quoted, with schools and boards seen as perhaps not being sufficiently pro-active in promoting existing channels. This is not to say that involvement was not encouraged, with many head teachers keenly advocating some form of more active participation and seeing it as a fundamental factor in both the management and Education processes within the school. However, such apparent apathy again raises questions about the extent to which the development of general and specific mechanisms for participation is demand driven.

Chapter 3 referred to the assertions of Barns and Williams (1997) and the CERI Report (1994) about growing awareness of the role of Education as "a route to social and economic success". However, in the minds of head teachers, futility was a further factor seen as explaining the lack of parental involvement (perhaps going beyond a lack of faith in the school to a broader mistrust of the ability of Education to alter existing socio-economic inequalities). This was regularly quoted as a factor in schools covering deprived areas, where one head teacher suggested that "many people have the wrong attitude to Education due to long term unemployment". This supports the argument that futility is a deeper problem than a simple lack of confidence in the channels for parental involvement. It is difficult to see what practical initiatives authorities could put in place at school level alone to reduce this, but it does point to the need broader area-based socio-economic strategies aimed at the communities in which the schools are located.

With regard to the lack of parental involvement in Education decision-making, head teachers at the selected study schools perceived the following reasons to be of greatest significance:

- Munro (top category) - satisfaction
- Cameron (top category) - apathy and satisfaction
- Ross (middle category) - apathy, lack of knowledge and satisfaction
- Frazer (bottom category) - apathy, satisfaction and insufficient channels
- Keith (bottom category) - apathy, insufficient channels, lack of knowledge and the school being an insufficiently welcoming place.

No real consistent trends were apparent in the study schools as to the extent of parental interest in becoming involved in school management. However, there was one particularly interesting comment. The head teacher at Frazer indicated that parental involvement was not of major significance important to the management of the school or the quality of Education therein. According to the head teacher, such comments were not based on the uniqueness of the parent body at Frazer. Rather, they were linked to the limits of school board influence and the restrictions on budgetary discretion within the school (resulting from increasing fiscal constraint and the large proportion of the revenue budget already allocated).

Head teachers were also prompted about their perceptions of the nature and focus of "communities". This was seen as linking closely to the existence of an element of "territoriality" referred to in the earlier section on parental choice. Certainly, they predominantly regarded the school as an important (if intangible) factor in engendering a sense of shared community identity amongst local residents, although some questioned the extent to which their school was an actual focus. This was partially due to the size and lack of homogeneity within many catchments. In

reality, catchments were generally perceived to be too large to allow a homogenous feeling of community or locale to be engendered. Any such perception was weakened by socio-economic heterogeneity in the area, the strength of smaller scale territorial loyalties and the frequency of outward placing requests. Head teachers perceived that there might be a greater feeling of community developed where outward and inward placing requests were less frequent. Their perceptions support the arguments in the literature that placing requests and school closures (either within the catchment or in a neighbouring one) water down the effects of any intra-catchment community ethos due to the gain or loss of young people from the area and their resultant change of focus. The implications of this are largely intangible in the short term, but new patterns of socialisation and allegiance may develop as a result. Regardless, there would appear to be an interesting opportunity for work on mental mapping among pupils, especially where there is a high proportion of placing requests.

Both schools from the top category did see themselves as being a focal point within the community, with this perception coincidentally being enhanced by lack of alternative communal facilities in the area. However, Ross' head teacher pointed to the importance of geographical factors, with the schools sitting at one end of a vast catchment. He suggested that "there is no way that we could be regarded as a community school". Such a situation was also referred to by the head teacher at Frazer, with the location of the school within the catchment meaning there was little use by outside groups. All of the schools saw placing requests as undermining this concept of community, with the head teacher at Frazer pointing out that "if 20% of children are going to school and making friends elsewhere then the idea of community is likely to be undermined."

The actual practical expression of parental participation in Education also requires consideration. Parental involvement in what? The main areas would appear to be the curriculum, spending decisions, staffing decisions and factors relating to teaching methods and the school ethos (e.g. uniforms, culture, extra-curricular activity). The curriculum has been a matter for central government, with a limited degree of discretion for local authorities and specific schools. On prompting as to their experience of parental interest, the majority of head teachers felt that parents had very little interest in curricular matters, which largely remain the domain of professionals. There was only a marginally stronger feeling that parents should have any say on these issues. Spending decisions were considered to be of more interest to parents according to the respondents (perhaps due to their more tangible nature and perceived link with Council Tax levels), but again on a range of 1 to 10 (not interested to very interested) the mean score was only 4.5. This was surprisingly low, given that it is one of the more prominent areas for parental involvement through boards. Input on staffing decisions was deemed to be of even less interest (3.6), except perhaps in the appointment of senior staff and head teachers. Interestingly, this partially indicates more of an interest in school direction, management and ethos than particular teaching experiences. However, the perceived low level of interest in all areas suggests that change in Education management has not been strongly demand-led (although it is worth considering that developments in Education may have been a pro-active service response to demands for change corporately or in other service areas).

Undoubtedly parents have more say than they did ten years ago. Furthermore, virtually all head teachers see their input as being essential to both the management of the school (7.8) and the quality of Education within its walls (7.9). Head teachers

consistently felt that there was a need to reconsider the promoting of parental involvement both locally and nationally based on the limitations of the existing channels and the apathy of parents. Despite the broad welcoming of parental involvement in all areas of Education management, concerns were consistently expressed by head teachers about the extent to which school boards, placing requests and league tables involve parents sufficiently in the current process.

Other Initiatives in Education Management

As outlined in Chapter 4, the former Regional Council's response to the imposed New Right agenda manifested itself in a range of consumer and citizen oriented processes/initiatives. In Education, these "decentralisation initiatives" were aimed at enhancing democratic, managerial and fiscal accountability by bringing school decisio-making closer to each locale. This manifested itself in DMR and the devolution of staffing decisions to the school level. It would appear at first glance that although there may be knock-on effects to pupils and parents, the initiatives are primarily managerial developments of limited direct benefit to parental involvement in decision-making. The earlier section on DMR indicated that there may be service improvements as a result of budgetary devolution, but the apparently limited role of the school board in spending decisions would appear to make this an exercise in strengthening managerial accountability and streamlining operational efficiency.

There were different perceptions as to the actual aims of the Regional Council's decentralisation initiatives. The head teacher at Cameron suggested that they would empower the school first and foremost and enable it to respond more effectively to local needs. The head teacher at Munro was more sceptical suggesting that "there is a noble aim to improve services to the public, but a probably hidden agenda which is to wrong foot the Government, stay a step ahead of it and show that local authorities can operate effectively and efficiently".

The head teacher at Ross cited that the initiatives would "make schools more responsive to local needs, giving more power to local establishments which would in turn lead to increased accountability and more relevant decision-making. There will be closer monitoring of budgets and targeting of resources and greater involvement of staff and parents through the school board and DMR Committee (a team of five key staff and the AFA to consider budgetary decisions)".

At Keith, the head teacher saw the decentralisation initiatives as "giving the school greater ownership of its own institution, increasing its ability to respond to the needs of clients and thus improving the quality of learning in the establishment." Similar benefits were identified at Frazer with "greater power for the schools to match pupil needs". However, the head teacher did indicate that they were part of a "cost saving exercise via the cleaning out of certain staff from Bath Street and India Street (Divisional and Regional HQs respectively). In addition, the curriculum framework is still too ridgid, so there is a need for further development to match curricula to local needs and aspirations".

Devolution of staffing decisions was also seen as a predominantly positive development, although there were concerns about the resultant increase in pressures on head teacher workload. The ability to select the short leat of candidates was

perceived as giving head teachers the opportunity to select staff who would not only have the appropriate skills, but would also be aware of the particular school ethos and specific local challenges. The head teacher could also assess how they would fit in with the existing staff team. Pupils and parents would see the benefits of the closer matching of skills with local needs. Moreover, head teacher accountability would be increased once again.

Parents are involved in the selection process for senior staff via the school board. However, head teachers pointed to a general lack of interest amongst school board members in participating in such decisions. Whilst the local elected member may sit on the panel, the absence of school board parent members undermines the accountability of the head teacher to the board and questions the accountability of both to the broader parent body. Head teachers stated that parental interest in involvement tends to be even lower in the promoted staff selection process. As a result, parental participation again appears to be minimal in what seems a fundamental area for an element of local control.

Only four respondents stated that the decentralisation initiatives would increase parental involvement or empower local communities. The most common response was that the initiatives empowered the school (through the head teacher), allowing it to respond more effectively to local needs. A popular answer was that the initiatives were aimed at improving services, although there is little direct evidence to show that this has occurred as a result. However, they again appear to have been predominantly managerialist initiatives rather than partnerships with service consumers or local citizens. Eleven of the respondents indicated that the initiatives were aimed at simplifying the Region's internal management, reducing bureaucracy and improving operational efficiency. Further benefits were identified as cost savings at the centre

as a result of a reduction in staff, reduced centralisation and an enhanced level of monitoring of budgetary performance due to disaggregation and increased head teacher accountability. The initiatives were also seen as a way of staying a step ahead of central government (although it was suggested that devolving control of Education management to each school, the Government was increasing its power relative to that of local authorities). All in all, the comments add to the perception that the Region's decentralisation initiatives in Education have emphasised managerial accountability rather than increased participation.

The Nature and Pace of Change

The responses from head teachers indicated a general support for the Regional decentralisation initiatives, with DMR and devolution of staffing decisions being considered as the most significant factors in the enhancement of head teacher power. However, it is worth considering that five respondents considered that head teacher power had not increased. As one head teacher pointed out, "Responsibility has certainly increased and we are more accountable for our activity. However, power is being shared as we must now consult with boards, unions and outside bodies before proceeding with certain initiatives". The comments of one head teacher were particularly interesting: "Despite increased powers for schools, central and local government have been far more interventionist - we are far more constrained by their political dogma that ever before". As intended, head teachers appear more accountable as a result of the implemented processes.

In saying that, there appears to be an element of support from head teachers for the initiatives introduced by central and local government, both in terms of their

effects on the quality of Education and the management of the school. Only two respondents saw the Government's Educational schemes (5-14, Curriculum Structure for Secondary Stages, etc) as having a negative effect on the quality of Education, although five said they had a detrimental effect on their ability to manage the school during their implementation (as a result of workload pressures). The majority of others linked any improvements in attainment levels to the Educational schemes rather than management processes/initiatives. The Government's management initiatives (school boards, GMS and parental choice) were less popular, with only around half saying they had had positive effects on their to manage the operation of their schools. Very few pointed to any benefits to the quality of Education arising from the management initiatives. Regional decentralisation schemes were regarded in a positive light by all respondents who chose to answer (18 out of 20) with parental involvement perceived in a similarly positive light.

In the context of this general acceptance of the initiatives introduced (with the notable exception of grant maintained schools), there was an undoubted consensus that there had been too many initiatives in recent years introduced at too fast a pace. The lack of an integrated strategic approach by central government in its thinking on Education was seen as causing both pupil and parental confusion and a reduction in staff morale as Education management processes were given insufficient time to bed down. Despite the identified shortcomings of the existing processes, three quarters of respondents generally felt that the decentralisation initiatives had gone far enough. There were broad concerns that further devolution of decision-making would see the school too isolated from the support of the LEA - a concern raised in the earlier discussion on GMS. Nonetheless, the concerns about the pace and nature of change should be considered in the light of a generally positive head teacher attitude to both

the principles behind the policies introduced and the experience of their implementation. This applied to both Regional Council and central government initiatives. Head teachers perceived that there was a requirement to revisit the adequacy of existing processes prior to implementing any additional Education management initiatives.

Looking Across the Categories in the School Hierarchy

Th existence of inter-category disparities within the hierarchy is not only of interest as part of a theoretical analysis, but also because it points to real disparities in experience on the ground within the city. Whilst such trends become most apparent on subsequent consideration of parental attitudes and actions, the perceptions of head teachers and parent board members are also significant in building up a picture of inter-locale inequalities. This is especially true if such perceptions are symptomatic of an underlying drive or enthusiasm for implementing change within the school.

Interestingly, there was a large degree of consistency in head teacher perceptions beween the study schools, with varying opinions on certain topics appearing independent of the position of the school in the hierarchy. On most occasions, the personality of each individual head teacher appeared a more significant factor influencing his/her attitudes and actions than the constraints or opportunities provided by the surrounding catchment. This was not always the case; one or two head teachers from particularly deprived catchments (outwith the study sample) appeared extremely frustrated at the limited success of their efforts to improve the quality of experience at their school against a backdrop of parent/pupil futility and cynicism. These were exceptions to the general rule.

With regard to parental choice, perceptions did appear linked to the outcomes inherent to position in the hierarchy. In short, head teachers had different concerns depending on the implications of placing requests for their own school. At the top of the hierarchy, head teachers perceived a large number of incoming placing requests to have a detrimental effect on both the management of the school and subsequent levels of attainment. Those at the bottom were equally concerned about the implications of the loss of "more motivated" pupils and the reduction in the total roll of the school. In the middle of the heirarchy, both sets of concerns were apparent, with the head teacher at Ross expressing fears about the loss of more able pupils and the influx of a significant number of pupils from elsewhere. All head teachers pointed to "better" pupils in each category being more likely to move. Whilst they all directly or indirectly expressed a faith in the quality of service provision at their school, those at the bottom of the hierarchy regularly quoted parent misconception as the single biggest factor pushing parents/pupils away. In saying that, they were also more likely to identify territorial factors as significant in restricting pupil mobility from their schools. It may be that the impact of travel costs also proved more significant in those areas.

There were few inter-category disparities in perception about DMR, with all head teachers identifying some benefits (and a few initial concerns) about the scheme. Little disparity in perception was expected here, with the managerial benefits of greater financial control being of equal value across schools. In saying that, within the study schools, head teachers from the top category expressed increased feelings of accountability as a result of the scheme. There could be a number of reasons for this, including potentially greater scrutiny from the board, heightened perceptions of a more informed parent body's ability to hold them to account and the absence of the

justifiable concerns about discipline and poor attainment held at some other schools. Indeed, Chapter 3 pointed to the greater levels of awareness, influence and access amongst parents from more affluent backgrounds[1]. This in itself is likely to enhance the accountability of head teachers to the board and parent body in areas with concentrations of more affluent parents.

Similarly, little inter-category disparities in perceptions were apparent regarding GMS. This was not the case south of the Border, where many schools in more affluent areas were quick to exploit opportunities to "remove the shackles" of LEA control, whilst schools at the bottom end of the hierarchy were less keen to lose the "safety net" of LEA support (Deem *et al*, 1995). In the case study, head teachers were broadly against the principle of deregulation of service production regardless of their school's position in the hierarchy, expressing particular concerns about the implications for staff morale and any integrated system of comprehensive Education. Any initial financial benefits were perceived to be shortlived and general scepticism was expressed about the use of opting out as a tool to avoid closure. Only in the bottom category did a few head teachers consider that it might be used as a delaying tactic in the face of school rationalisation. This has indeed subsequently occurred in a number of schools threatened with closure/merger in Glasgow Division (and elsewhere in Scotland). Other than those cases, there has been general solidarity in the opposition to GMS across Glasgow (and Scotland).

With regard to parental involvement in school decision-making, head teacher support for the principle of school boards was common, although some concerns were expressed about the adequacy of boards as a mechanism facilitating participation. Parent involvement in decisions about staffing was also welcomed. No inter-category

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[1] with concentrations of households from the top and middle of the occupational hierarchy (Hamnett, 1996)

patterns were apparent. Head teachers from the top category were more likely to consider the existence of an element of community feeling focused around the school. Whether this reflects the absence of a substantial loss of pupils from the area through placing requests is a distinct possibility. Indeed, head teachers from all schools perceived a loss of pupils through parental choice to pose a threat to any feeling of community cohesion. Such trends were more apparent at schools lower down the school hierarchy, perhaps partially as a result of a more defensive reaction in the face of a threat to future school viability.

The absence of significant inter-category differences in head teacher opinion appears to reflect the shared ethos built up amongst head teachers in the former Regional Council. This expressed itself in the support for the LEA (and the redistributive principles of the Social Strategy) in the face of change, a general desire to avoid active competition for pupils, concerns about the overall local Education system and a regularly expressed desire to obtain the "best" for their school regardlless of its place in the hierarchy. As a result, disparities in perceptions often appeared to be more a factor of differing attitudes, abilities and actions of individuals as it was of the broader contextual factors around each school. Such inter-category disparities come to the fore on investigation of the attitudes and actions of parents investigated in Chapter 8.

The Head Teacher as a "Gatekeeper" and the Schools Hierarchy

One of the less tangible phenomena arising from the interviews related to the overall attitude and drive of the head teachers. It was initially considered that may be linked to the other criteria outlined in Figure 5.5 (used to categorise schools within the

hierarchy). It was anticipated that the drive of the head teacher would perhaps be allowed greater expression in schools near the top of the hierarchy whilst frustrated by external factors in those near the bottom. In short, head teachers in schools with more affluent catchments, higher levels of attainment and rolls close to capacity would demonstrate more enthusiasm for the challenge (if not the pace) of change than their counterparts at the other end of the scale. It is possible that the deprived nature of some communities and their futility about the Education process as a route to work would compound operational difficulties in schools in less well-off areas to undermine expectations if not morale in head teachers there. The majority of head teachers would be located somewhere in the middle, with expressed enthusiasm varying between schools in an *ad hoc* manner and no particular pattern apparent.

Interestingly, no such trend was apparent in any of the categories, with the drive of the head teacher appearing to be independent of the position in the hierarchy of each school. Whilst the "innovators, compliers and laggards" typology seems sound, it would seem not to be determined by external factors in isolation. Innovation did not appear to be generally restricted in deprived areas or broadly apparent in more affluent catchments. Whilst differences in head teacher attitude and enthusiasm did exist, there was no reason to link this causally to the position of the school in the hierarchy. Indeed, it appeared more to be a function of the personality of the individual head teacher. Looking specifically at the study schools, there were few apparent variations in attitude and opinion between the head teachers (other than those that might be expected regarding parental choice as a result of the direct implications of placing requests on each school).

The lack of an apparent causal relationship between the drive of the head teacher and the school's position in the hierarchy does not mean that individual head

teachers do not have an important role to play as drivers or gatekeepers of change. Indeed, it was apparent that different head teachers had different attitudes towards their school boards, DMR and the making of placing requests. The majority appeared to retain the share of power within each school, the extent to which this was shared with board members being dependent on individual relationships and the attitude, ability and action of the head teacher and chair person. Some head teachers were more likely than others to implement initiatives to promote the school through publications, extra-curricular activity and innovative forums to improve staff/pupil relations. For example, it was interesting to note variations in the layout and message of school handbooks issued to parents by each school. Some promoted academic achievement, whilst others emphasised community development issues and an understanding of the pupils' role in broader society. These handbooks often bore the "fingerprint" of head teacher attitude, varying depending on the expectations of the local catchment population.

Whilst head teacher drive may remain a factor in the school's ability to marginally alter its position in the hierarchy, it would be difficult to isolate this relationship and draw any causal link without detailed monitoring of performance over time. Interestingly, head teachers did not seem to see boards as significantly inhibiting their autonomy, although they all considered the boards to act as check on their activity. The extent to whuich power is actually being shared will be investigated further (from a board perspective) in Chapter 7. At this stage, it appears that power remains predominantly in the hands of the head teacher at the school level, with "upwards" fiscal and managerial accountability proving a more significant check to head teacher activity than accountability to the board or the broader parent body.

Conclusion

This Chapter has examined the extent to which head teachers' experience of the various Education management initiatives compares with the policy intentions of central government and the former Strathclyde Regional Council. At the same time, it has drawn some initial conclusions from the head teacher comments on the appropriateness of each initiative and considered the implications of change for the LEA, schools and local communities. Whilst there has been an element of head teacher support for the principles behind some of the changes coming from central government and the LEA (with the notable exception of GMS), concerns have been expressed about the pace of change and the practical implications of many of the initiatives and processes introduced for each school. Perhaps not unexpectedly, there has been more head teacher support for Regionally generated processes than there has been for those coming from central government.

The principles behind parental choice have generally found favour with head teachers, although concerns were expressed about the perceived detrimental effects of a significant number of inward or outward placing requests on the smooth running of the school and overall levels of attainment at each establishment. Whilst head teachers appeared concerned about the general appropriateness of a free market in Education, parental choice was considered to be justified by the perceived existence of a pseudo-market within the state sector. A sufficient range of Educational experiences were deemed to exist to offer parents real choice between schools, pointing to the existence of a form of hierarchy within the state sector (as suggested by Bondi, 1988; and Gambetta, 1987).

The principles and practice of DMR have also generally found favour, with head teachers considering that increased autonomy and discretion to vire between cost centres should produce real knock-on benefits to pupils in each locale. DMR is also considered to generated a significant increase in fiscal and managerial accountability. However, the inadequacy of existing mechanisms for broad parental involvement in decision-making means that this accountability is upward to the centre or at best sideways to the school board. Similar comments apply to perceptions of the appropriateness, adequacy and accountability generated by the devolution of staffing decisions to each school.

Whilst the principle of school boards has found favour with many head teachers as a means of increasing parental involvement in Education management, concerns were consistently expressed about their adequacy in practice. Moreover, the feedback suggests that links between boards and the broader parent body in each locale are typically poor. This not only fails to strengthen democratic accountability as envisaged by the Scottish Office and the Regional Council, but it also weakens positive developments in the managerial accountability of the head teacher to parents in each locale.

Whilst some short term benefits were perceived to emanate from GMS, head teachers unanimously rejected opting out as a desirable outcome, either for their own school or for the fututre of the local public Education system. In addition to the perceived threat to staff, the fragmentation associated with supply-side deregulation was seen as undermining any systematic provision of comprehensive Education and the redistributive capacity of the local authority. In the main, head teachers did not consider such outcomes to be to the benefit of the quality of Education provision in each local authority area.

With regard to the implications of change for the LEA, schools and communities, a number of conclusions have been drawn under each of the socio-political and Education management research questions outlined in Figure 5.1. Generally speaking, the LEA appeared to have responded pragmatically to the imposed change from central government and the (predominantly non-service specific) pressure from local civil society for greater accountability and improved service quality. It appeared to have maintained progress towards attaining the overall aims and Education objectives of its Social Strategy through the DMR funding formulae and the sharing of a general public service ethic with its head teachers. Whether such a relationship can be maintained over time within the Reorganised authorities remains to be seen. Had it not been for Local Government Reorganisation, the responses by the former Regional Council in Education would appear to have minimised the implications of the centralisation of power and decentralisation of control on its overall objectives and operation. Budgetary constraints and capping may have proved more significant factors in the medium to long term.

Schools themselves have been empowered to some degree through the head teacher, with the increase in fiscal and managerial accountability being matched by enhancements in local autonomy and discretion in budgetary reallocation and staff selection. However, as mentioned earlier, parental choice has combined with changing residential patterns to threaten the future viability of some schools, whilst individual placing requests have often had a detrimental effect on the smooth running and overall levels of attainment at others.

Individual communities would appear to have benefited from the increased autonomy and accountability at the local level. However, parental choice has at best altered the pupil profile of each school and at worst threatened to leave some

communities "school free". The availability of choice appears to vary from one catchment to another dependent on socio-economic, psychological and geographical factors, allowing individuals in some locales to benefit more than others from the consumerist agenda. This appears to maintain if not exacerbate socio-spatial inequalities within the city. The inadequacies of school boards produce further concerns, with the broader parent communities generally failing to participate in the decision-making process. Whether or not this results from the ineffectiveness of school boards as mechanisms for involvement or a general apathy on the part of parents is debatable. The two appear inextricably linked. Regardless, the individualistic consumerist agenda facilitated by parental choice is not mirrored by a growth in active citizen participation as envisaged by central or local government.

Some initial inter-category conclusions can be drawn. Perhaps of greatest significance is the fairly consistent support for the introduction of DMR, the principles of parental involvement and the continued resistance to GMS. There appears to be a strong element of solidarity in principle to the concepts of strengthened local accountability and LEA controlled inter-area redistribution. However, some important differences in opinion were apparent. Head teachers from schools from the top category appeared to feel more accountable to their boards and the broader parent body than the norm, perhaps reflecting greater levels of knowledge (and related influence) amongst a generally more affluent catchment population. They also perceived "their" boards to be more effective than was generally considered to be the case. Attitudes to parental choice also varied. Respondents from the top category saw difficulties resulting from a large number of inward placing requests. Not surprisingly, those at the bottom saw problems stemming from a loss of more able pupils and a reduction in roll versus capacity. Those in the middle saw problems in

both resulting from gains and losses. Further detailed consideration of the implications of change for specific locales and the overall socio-political geography of the city is forthcoming in Chapter 10.

Finally, the lack of expected patterns of variation in headteacher drive and attitude was of particular interest. In the specific study schools, variations in attainment, roll, placing requests, the socio-economic make-up of the catchment and the school ethos did not appear to be related to head teacher drive. More generally, where variations did exist in the head teachers' place in the "innovators/compliers/laggards" typology, these appeared independent of the position of the individual's school in the school hierarchy. Nonethless, the head teacher does appear to be the key player in the local Education arena, with his/her attitudes, abilities and actions being fundamental in determining the extent to which change is driven within each school. His/her autonomy does appear to be influenced to some degree by the school board and its check on head teacher activity, although respondents perceived that the extent of this is relatively weak. This will be examined further from a board perspective in Chapter 7. The degree to which the findings from this element of the field work support or refute the initial conclusions drawn from analysis of the literature and relate to the broader theories of local government are discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

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Chapter 7 - The School Board Perspective

Chapter 6 considered in detail the perceptions of head teachers as to the effectiveness of recent changes in Education management and outlined their role as drivers or gatekeepers of change within schools. Head teachers were seen to be key players both in the implementation of Education management processes/initiatives within each school and the extent and form of parental access to power through the decision making process. Their attitudes, abilities and actions were considered to be significant variables in the successful implementation of central and local government policies aimed at increasing choice and accountability and enhancing service quality. The effectiveness of attempts to implement such an agenda was identified in the literature as being constrained by underlying socio-economic trends which reduced the social mobility, influence and choice of many less affluent individuals/groups. This in turn restricted access to Educational goods under open market conditions.

If functioning as intended, the school board plays an equally important (if differently focused) role. As outlined in Chapter 3, the Scottish Office (1989a and 1989b) envisaged boards as facilitating greater parental input into the running of schools as well as acting as a vehicle for schools in their attempts to communicate with the broader parent community. As discussed at some length, the specific operation of the board varies from one school to another dependent on the attitude, ability and actions of board members and the relationships between the board, the head teacher and the broader parent body. Moreover, this occurs in a context affected by the tendency of individual head teachers to be "innovators, compliers or laggards" (as outlined in the previous Chapter). Head teachers are considered to be the main "brokers of power" in the local Education arena, sharing power to varying degrees with the school board

(Deem *et al*, 1995; Clegg, 1989). In short, there is a complex set of variables interacting to determine the extent to which Education management processes and initiatives are received and implemented and the extent to which boards are able and/or allowed to fulfil the role envisaged for them by the Scottish Office.

Five themes identified by Macbeth (1990) indicate the reasons for the disparity in the nature and operation of boards:

- each school board has substantial facility to decide for itself how it operates;
- which functions a board emphasises, who it co-opts, and how it operates depends on its own objectives, as well as those laid down by central and local government;
- some of the variation between schools in Scotland is a result of decisions at school level, many of which are made by boards (e.g. individual school policy on application of discipline and uniform codes, appointment of teaching staff, ratification of budgetary decisions made by the head teacher, how the board itself liaises with the head teacher and the parent body). Some of these have knock-on effects on the subsequent operation of the boards themselves;
- parent members form a majority on all boards, resulting in distinct local challenges to arguably more consistent professional thinking from school staff (despite the general lack of parental interest in active participation); and
- boards have an ability to exert influence on the decisions taken within a school even where powers are not held.

As outlined above, these factors are further influenced by the varying attitudes, abilities and actions of board members (and the extent to which these imprint themselves and the overall working of the board). This influences the tendency and capability of the board to work with head teachers to affect change.

This chapter considers the specific attitudes of parent members of the school boards in the five selected study schools. It assesses their perceptions of both the need for and success of the changes in Education management, prior to examining their relationships with head teachers and the broader parent body. This should indicate the extent to which they fulfil the role envisaged for them by the Scottish Office. The chapter goes on to examine the role of boards as drivers or gatekeepers of change and the extent to which they facilitate democratic involvement in the school decision-making process. The chapter feeds into the Chapter 9 conclusions to address the socio-political and Education management research questions outlined in Figure 5.1.

Table 7.1 - Breakdown of School Board Membership in the Selected Study Schools

School	Parents	Staff	Co-optees	Total
Munro	6	2	3	**11**
Cameron	6	2	3	**11**
Ross	5	2	2	**9**
Keith	4	1	2	**7**
Frazer	4	1	2	**7**

Methodology

There was a total of 25 parent members sitting on the boards of the five study schools. Each board is chaired by a parent member, with further parent representatives (ensuring a parent majority on every board), selected school staff and co-opted individuals comprising the remaining voting membership. The head teacher, local

elected member and Director of Education may also attend, but are not permitted to vote. Membership at the study schools is broken down in Table 7.1. The number of individuals in each category is laid down in statute and is dependent on the roll of each school (Macbeth, 1990). This small sample size ruled out any detailed quantitative statistical analysis, limiting the design and subsequent implementation of the methodology to be used for this part of the study. As a result, it was decided to adopt a number of semi-structured interviews with parent members of the boards in each school. Each interview was based around set questions outlined in a formal questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised a mix of open and closed questions (see Appendix 7.1).

Three of the five boards initially indicated a reluctance to become involved in the study, citing concerns about the volume of board work already required to be undertaken on a voluntary basis and the extent to which they may be held accountable for particular comments. Following assurances about anonymity and the value of this part of the research to the overall study, a compromise was reached whereby interviews[1] would be held solely with school board chairpeople. Copies of the questionnaire were circulated to other board members for comment prior to the interview. In addition to the chairpeople, a further seven board members from the study schools actually completed the questionnaire, providing a useful supplement to the chairperson information. This resulted in a fairly broad trawl of opinion, covering about half of the parent members in the study schools.

[1] Two of the five board chairpeople insisted on completing the questionnaire rather than participating in a face to face interview.

Head teachers in the study schools also requested copies of the questionnaire for comment prior to any discussions with boards. No significant amendments to the nature of the questions posed were made by either party during the consultation phases.

The questionnaire was designed to examine member perceptions of:

- the role and responsibilities of boards;
- reasons for becoming a board member;
- the nature and range of activity discussed at board meetings;
- the extent of and mechanisms employed in liaising with the broader parent body and parental perception of board effectiveness; and
- general member satisfaction with board operation to date.

This information was supplemented with feedback on member attitudes towards:

- the principle and outcomes of parental choice;
- the benefits of enhanced head teacher accountability;
- the principle of grant maintained status (GMS); and
- the volume and focus of recent central and local government initiatives in Education management.

(The latter group of questions allowed comparisons to be drawn between the perceptions of head teachers and board members).

The adoption of a formal questionnaire as the basis of discussion allowed a continuation of the consistency achieved in the survey of head teacher attitudes. It was clearly expressed by the researcher at each of the interviews that the questionnaire was designed to provide a focal framework for discussion and was not intended to restrict the nature or scale of member responses. This caveat facilitated detailed discussion on many of the topics raised, with supplementary questioning being used to channel more

specific responses, particularly on interviewees' reasons for becoming board members, perceptions of board effectiveness and attitudes towards the volume and focus of recent initiatives.

Where board members opted to fill in questionnaires, such supplementary discussion could not be developed. However, the rigorous nature of the questionnaire ensured that the main areas for consideration were still covered. Whilst interviews would have been preferable, sufficient detail was forthcoming to minimise the extent to which the process adopted undermined the study. Unfortunately, it did result in a "tick list" response to many of the questions. This meant that the number of specific quotes obtained from the process was significantly lower than from the head teacher survey. This is apparent in the body of the chapter.

The cross referencing of the board and head teacher interview questions allowed a number of conclusions to be drawn about the relationships between these players, consistencies of agendas and approach, and shared perceptions of the success of various initiatives. These conclusions are discussed in this chapter and developed further in Chapter 9, integrating the attitudes and experience of head teachers, school boards and the broader parent body in each of the study schools.

The responses given were largely subjective, reflecting respondents' personal attitudes towards the issues raised. The views expressed were thus those of the individual rather than the collective response of the board. A greater volume of participation would perhaps have indicated whether the expressed views were generally held/shared both within boards and across them. The responses demonstrated that differing perceptions are often held by members of the same board. Bearing in mind the potential for lack of cohesion of attitude and approach within any elected or appointed body, the findings stress the importance of the role of the chairperson within the board

and the extent to which their personality may be imprinted on the focus the board adopts and the way it chooses to operate. The strong role of the chairperson was identified by both Deem *et al* (1995) and Clegg (1989) in their earlier analyses of governing bodies.

Whilst greater levels of participation would have enhanced this part of the fieldwork, the difficulties arising from lack of willingness to participate were unavoidable. Nonetheless, the methodology adopted allowed a number of assertions to be made about board members' perception of their roles and the effectiveness of their boards' operation. In addition, further conclusions could be drawn about differences in board operation, intra-board relations and the extent to which the attitudes, actions and abilities of board members facilitate parental participation in the education decision-making. Finally, on each of the identified research questions sufficient information was gleaned from the process adopted to inform conclusions on the role and operation of boards within the five study schools.

The analysis outlined in this chapter adopts the same format as the previous chapter[2] on head teachers' perceptions, drawing broad conclusions from analysis of the range of responses whilst backing these up with specific quotes from the interviews and questionnaires.

[2] Note that the broad conclusions are drawn from analysis of responses from the five study schools rather than the twenty schools used in the head teacher study. This was based on the need to focus the study on particular schools in the identified hierarchy and practical time and resource constraints on extending the work to all schools.

Board Member Feedback

The Role and Responsibilities of Boards

Macbeth (1990) indicates that school boards have three main aims: the educational welfare of the children, the efficient management of the school, and the facilitation of local democracy. Although these aims are not prescriptive, it might be expected that the role and responsibilities of the respective boards would in some way reflect them. However, it became apparent from the survey that the extent to which these aims were pursued varied from one board to another.

Whilst the tick list of responses to the questionnaire indicated that there was a degree of consensus across boards, the detailed interview responses indicated that the focus of boards attention differed between schools. This was determined by particular priorities in the individual schools and did not always reflect the schools' position in the hierarchy. For example, building maintenance was a major issue regularly discussed at Cameron, where problems existed with the accommodation available to the school. This was of similar importance to Frazer, experiencing many of the same difficulties. Whilst the issue was regularly discussed at the other boards, the emphasis placed on it was not so great.

Whilst position in the hierarchy did appear to have some relevance, the attitude and ability of the members were of equal importance in determining board focus. Individuals participating in the interviews all seemed aware of the major issues affecting the school and the board. However, again their individual priorities differed. A number of explanations for the adoption of a differing focus within Macbeth's (1990) envisaged aims became apparent. Firstly, "the educational welfare of the children" may be defined

differently from one school to another, producing variations in emphasis between establishments. This was apparent in the background research undertaken to identify the range of schools within the hierarchy outlined in the previous chapter. Individual school handbooks provided a useful indicator. In short, schools where the academic expectations of parents was likely to be high were keener to emphasise this as a focus for the school than those lower in the hierarchy. The latter tended to emphasise the importance of the pupil's role in the community and preparation for the broader responsibilities of citizenship.

The focus at Munro was channelled towards academic attainment and concerns about declining standards (partially as a result of inward placing requests). At Cameron, these issues were still important, but there appeared a focus on maintaining the school ethos, solving accommodation difficulties and ensuring a "rounded" schooling for all pupils. At Ross, attention focused on ensuring a degree of integration of pupils from a broad and far from homogenous catchment. At the bottom of the hierarchy, Frazer and Keith seemed primarily concerned with securing the future of the schools within an environment of falling rolls and threatened closures. However, disparities in attitude and focus were apparent between these two schools, with Frazer being more robust in its own defence and keener to advocate other elements of its responsibilities. Close similarities with their head teacher's priorities were apparent at all schools.

Secondly, a further blurring of focus arises from the fact that efficient management and democracy do not necessarily go hand in hand, and there may be differences between board members as to where the emphasis should lie. Thirdly, there is undoubtedly scope for conflict between school boards and LEAs as to their

management responsibilities. Macbeth (1990) suggests that more strategic issues and policies affecting groups of schools are the democratic remit of LEA's, and that boards should therefore look inwards for their principal focus. This focus is bound to lead to inconsistencies between boards. Finally, variations in the power differential between the LEA, head teachers and boards becomes a further variable in the equation.

As outlined in Chapter 3, Macbeth (1990) suggests four "types" of school governing bodies based on the English experience[3]:

- an **accountable governing body** which aims to ensure that the school is working along LEA guidelines;
- an **advisory governing body** which acts as a forum for local ideas;
- a **supportive governing body** which supports school staff and trusts in their professionalism;
- a **mediating governing body** which acts as an intermediary between LEA and the school, looking both inward and outwards.

In addition, Macbeth (1990) suggests that boards may be characterised by:

- **domination**, where the board conforms to the wishes of established interests in the area; or
- **factionalisation**, where the board divides into groups on the basis of individual loyalties.

Board members were prompted as to the extent to which this typology fitted their board. Feedback confirmed that variations existed in the way each board worked. Moreover, each board's operation appeared to be predominantly reactive, with aspects of all of the above phenomena being reflected on occasion depending on the issue being

[3] Whilst their constitution varies from Scottish boards, the principles on which their operation is based are largely the same.

addressed. However, the responses generally pointed to the predominant role of all boards reflecting that of a supportive governing body, potentially explained in terms of the general high degree of respect across civil society for the teaching profession in Scotland. In saying that, some of the comments from the Ross board suggested that they were more likely to question the decisions of staff and were more concerned with the power of the head teacher than others in the sample. However, this was an exception amongst responses, with the vast majority of respondents indicated that they accepted the professional opinions of head teachers on key issues "on most occasions", mirroring the comments made by head teachers regarding board reliance on staff expertise. This appears to support the broadly held faith of Scottish civil society in the professionalism of Education staff, reflected in the general opposition to opting out.

With regard to the other elements of the typology, none of the respondents agreed that their boards were mainly concerned with ensuring the school operated along LEA lines. Indeed, the chairperson from Cameron pointed out that "we have regularly taken a strong stance against particular Regional Council proposals, specifically those relating to learning support and absence cover". The general response indicated that boards were keener to support the school in its dealings with the LEA than *vice versa.* This is important in the first instance as it indicates that board members appear to make a distinction between the LEA and the school. This may largely be explained by the fact that members will find it easier to identify themselves with the tangible and visible operation of the familiar local school than that of a more distant "central" institution. Regardless, it becomes interesting from a power perspective, with the school effectively *appearing* to be given a form of democratic "mandate" in its dealings with the LEA on issues of local importance. This reflects the political science perspective on the role of boards as mechanisms for participation, allowing the school to be responsive to local

need and retaining a distinct identity from the LEA (Taylor, 1977). If the balance of power has shifted to the schools, the position of the LEA might thus be likened to that of the centre in any federalist structure. Whilst some might argue that there could be a short distance between federalism and fragmentation, it is perhaps more important to note that an element of LEA accountability is ensured through the watching eyes of the school (boards *and* staff). This perhaps provides a local check on the free use of the redistributive power retained by the LEA. A form of ongoing "bottom-up" validation may also explain the broad head teacher support for the LEA's operation of the local education system.

However, the situation appears less preferential from a participative democracy perspective (Deem *et al*, 1995). The extent to which any of the boards in the study sample appeared to act as a forum or channel for local ideas/expression could be seriously questioned. The feedback points to there being an almost total absence of consultation with the broader parent body, with any ideas coming from the limited number of parent members on each board, or co-opted members[4] from other parts of the community. As outlined by Brehony (1984), Brigley (1984) and Kogan (1995), the mandate given by the board would thus seem to be much weaker in practice than it appears in principle. The board appears most saliently to act as a consultative body for the head teacher on LEA matters. Thus, whilst (in the broadest sense) boards are involved in the school/LEA relationship, their specific role seems to be more aimed at supporting the staff than acting as intermediaries or brokers of power. If, as it appears, power has indeed shifted from the LEA to the school, the importance of the head teacher as a broker of power in the local Education arena again becomes apparent.

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[4] the co-opted members on the boards in the study schools included two local business people, an academic and a senior member of locally based staff from the LEC.

Within Macbeth's (1990) "dominated/factionalised categorisation" there appeared to be little direct evidence of "established interests" playing a role in the operation of boards. This may in part be explained by the limited responsibilities of boards in Scotland. However, board members (especially from schools in the lowest category of the hierarchy) perceived that *they* were more likely to be involved in other local issues/groups than the majority of parents. Although this assessment is by nature subjective, it does raise the possibility that if boards are not necessarily dominated by established community interests, they at least heavily comprise individuals who tend to participate in other forums. Moreover, the co-option of prominent business interests may exacerbate the opportunities for domination over time (Dearlove, 1973; Newton, 1976).

Whilst Macbeth (1990) fails to expand at any length on a definition of "established interests" in a "dominated governing body", the responses nonetheless point to an element of cross representation on various community groups. This was particularly the case at Frazer and Keith, perhaps reflecting the high percentage of the population involved in some form of community participation. In saying that, responses to other parts of the questionnaire indicate that despite this commonality of involvement, the boards on which these "established interests" sat fulfilled a more minimalist role than some others in the sample.

Factionalisation also appeared fairly common. This appeared especially true in those catchments where community participation was high, although Ross (from the middle category) also experienced the phenomenon, perhaps due to the lack of homogeneity in pupil background. The issue of intra-board factionalisation is discussed at more length later in the chapter.

The actual operation of school boards might perhaps be expected to vary depending on the board's position on a spectrum ranging from active, progressive and influential bodies to minimalist bodies (fulfilling only statutory obligations and exerting little influence on the head teacher or the LEA). Macbeth (1992) suggested that the latter has been the most common in Scotland to date. This proved largely to be the case on closer analysis of the study school boards. Moreover, there is considerable member apprehension about the prospect of being given enhanced powers, with central government rhetoric about extending parental rights not matched with the desire, even amongst parent activists, to take on new burdens. This is discussed at more length in Chapters 9 and 11 in light of central government proposals to extend school board powers.

At Munro, the board chairperson indicated that "we have a great deal of respect for the head teacher and what he's trying to achieve, whilst we obviously keep a close eye on what's going on, we tend to leave most of the day to day work to the staff".

At Cameron, the chairperson specifically saw the role of the board as being "to support the head teacher", whilst at Ross, the board was seen as providing the head teacher with parents' perspective to help him to make informed decisions".

Even at the bottom of the hierarchy, the chairperson at Keith pointed out that the board "listened to the views of school staff more often than not".

Despite this common minimalist position, Chapter 3 outlined that school boards have six categories of action available to them. Board members were prompted as to

how these actions found expression in their schools. The definitions and responses are summarised below, with further detail forthcoming later in the chapter:[5]

- **rejection** (the refusal to spend time considering an issue) - predominantly expressed in the remitting of consideration of many management issues to staff in the school or failure to place items on board meeting agendas.
- **delegation** (passing a task to another group or person, or accepting delegated functions from the LEA) - functions appear to be regularly delegated from the board to the head teacher, largely reflecting the supporting role outlined earlier. Accepting delegated functions from the LEA was less common, with issues coming to the board through the head teacher on the vast majority of occasions. The responses pointed to only three specific occasions where functions were delegated directly from the LEA - consideration of Truancy Council issues, issues around local school holidays and decisions on lets of the school building outwith school hours.
- **information** (acquiring it, making it accessible, or publicising it) - on virtually all occasions the head teacher had significant input into the contents of meeting agendas. This allowed an element of gatekeeping of information to take place. However, most information of relevance to the board (performance figures, policy proposals and consultation documents) was received directly from the LEA. The extent to which it was subsequently made accessible appeared limited. Whilst some information was picked up in newsletters to parents, details of other issues appeared solely to be outlined (often in abstract) in the minutes of the meeting.
- **accountability** (rendering account or monitoring activity) - this related predominantly to checking the activity of the head teacher and commenting on LEA proposals for change. The extent to which this occurred varied from school to

[5] The generality of responses pointed to limited inter-board differences.

school depending on the perceived importance of the issue raised. The school budget and monitoring of ongoing activity were the most common areas quoted for scrutiny;

- **advice** (consulting, promoting/advising, or being consulted/advised) this activity was the most commonly referred to in the responses received, reflecting the supportive role outlined earlier. The extent to and regularity with which it occurred varied dependent on perceptions of the adequacy of the head teacher and the attitude and ability of board members; and
- **decision-making** (policy making, approving and implementing decisions) - on virtually all occasions this linked closely to the adequacy of relations with the head teacher. Approving decisions following consultation and discussion appeared most common, although some boards appeared more reluctant than others to support the head teacher's recommendations.

In short, whilst the role and responsibilities of boards seemed fairly consistent, disparities did exist in the extent to which particular issues were given priority within each school. The broad focus of each board to some extent reflected the school's position in the hierarchy, specifically the broad expectations in terms of attainment, discipline and ethos that went with this. More detailed priorities appeared to be dependent on a wider range of internal and external factors (such as the nature of the catchment, specific school issues, threat of closure/merger, etc.). The functioning of each board seemed to be more reactive than proactive, with category in the hierarchy being insignificant to this overall approach. The activity of all the study school boards in some way reflected the three broad aims of boards outlined by Macbeth (1990), although (significantly) boards seemed particularly weak in facilitating local democracy through involving parents in the decision-making process. This broadly mirrors the

perceptions of head teachers and their concerns about the accountability of boards to the broader parent community. The significance of this weakness is discussed at length later in the chapter.

Reasons for Becoming a Board Member

Respondents indicated a number of reasons for becoming involved in the school board in the first place. These were of significance in determining the motivation of board members and the extent to which they perceived their role to mirror those intended by the Scottish Office. A common response was that parent representation on the board allowed the portrayal of a stronger parent view in dealings with schools and the LEA. No direct distinction was made by respondents as to whether this related to strengthening their personal viewpoint in such dealings, or that of the broader parent body. Whilst all respondents were keen to stress the importance of parent involvement in general, on some occasions there appeared a desire on their part to personally influence the debate within schools. For example, the chairperson at Cameron stated that he "wouldn't have become involved if he hadn't had a vision for the way the school should be going". Similarly, the chairperson at Ross pointed out "that there were issues within the school which I felt really had to be tackled and didn't see anyone else wanting to try to solve them". In both cases there appeared to be a genuine wish to make a positive contribution to discussions rather than to attain either personal advantage or prestige via school board membership.

Nonetheless, this does raise an interesting question as to the role and objectives of school board members. In short, is membership aimed at enhancing personal input or facilitating more collectively oriented parent involvement? All respondents indicated

that both were goals; although it must be pointed out that mechanisms to allow broader involvement[6] had generally not been put in place (or fully utilised where they had been). The links between the boards and the broader parent body are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Whilst the limited powers of boards in Scotland (compared to those of governing bodies in England and Wales) would appear to preclude participation predominantly for political means, there nonetheless exists some requirement for a certain type of personality to become involved in community representation (in whatever form). There was evidence to suggest that this may have manifested itself in some boards in the form of a hierarchy, with the chairperson appearing to be in a dominant position (Deem *et al*, 1995). A number of the questionnaire responses directly contradicted statements made in the chairperson interviews, indicating at least differences of opinion if not formal dissent (outlining the factional element of board activity mentioned earlier). For example, at Keith, the chairperson indicated a satisfaction with the level of parental consultation; whilst another board member quoted it as "non existent". This was particularly the case at Frazer and Keith - from the bottom category of the schools hierarchy - potentially reflecting the more politicised environment in these catchment areas. Chapter 8 outlines the high proportion of community group activity of parents in these areas. It might be speculated that such environments could both nurture the political education of those individuals becoming involved and lay the grounds for dissent between rival viewpoints. Regardless, intra-group and inter-personal relations can be presumed to have some effect on the operation of each board. Whilst clashes of personality and ideology could perhaps be

[6] such as the wide circulation of concise and relevant information, the publication of details/outcomes of meetings or the holding of regular liaison meetings.

anticipated, consideration needs to be given to the extent to which these could be resolved in the interests of board cohesion and direction (Clegg, 1989). Alternatively, it may be that these tensions can be exacerbated by the "type of personality" required by an individual wishing to participate as a community representative.

It would also be fair to point out that if board members are fulfilling a personal agenda (even to a limited extent), this does not necessarily mean that their broader objectives are contrary to those of the head teacher or parents in general. Indeed, respondents from Cameron and Ross stated specifically that the role of the board was to "support the head teacher and staff in the operation of the school" and "to act as a sounding board for head teacher ideas". Similarly, the chairperson at Munro indicated that the establishment of boards "allowed the provision of the parental viewpoint to complement the professional one ... with the professional skills of parents also being helpful by providing alternative perspectives on key issues". Nonetheless, it must be borne in mind that (as with head teachers) the attitudes, abilities and actions of board members will have a significant effect on the way the board liaises with both the head teacher and the broader parent body. The effects of personal agendas on the role and operation of the board therefore become an important factor. On a more positive note, despite an element of dissent within boards appearing indicative of underlying tensions, it nonetheless suggests that at least some of the issues being considered by boards appear to be of a relevant and sensitive nature.

In addition to the pull factors influencing decisions to take up board membership, a number of push factors were also in evidence. The chairperson at Ross indicated that whilst he had an active interest in school matters, he was "pushed" somewhat by "a feeling of awkwardness about the lack of interest of other parents". Similarly, questionnaire respondents from Munro and Keith indicated that they had been

invited to attend following a lack of response from other parents. A reluctance to become involved seems commonplace amongst the broader parent body, whether as a result of general apathy, satisfaction or futility about opportunities for change. It was common to all study schools, regardless of their position in the hierarchy.

A further significant push factor for membership was highlighted in both the chairperson interview and questionnaire returns from Cameron. The proposed merger of the school had resulted in a large degree of parental interest in involvement in the decision-making process. The chairperson stated that "the specific issue brought me to the board rather than any general wish to be involved in the running of the school". This position was also intimated by two of the head teachers in schools outwith the chosen study areas who indicated that their school boards had failed to attract sufficient parent interest/membership to continue in existence after a merger or closure issue had been resolved, despite very active roles played by both boards during the disputes. This perhaps emphasises the importance of issue politics in the local (and national) political arena, suggesting that sweeping statements about underlying public apathy towards service provision and local governance must be treated cautiously.

Parent members' decisions to become involved in boards appears therefore to be based on both pull and push factors. On the pull side, a desire to become involved generally in the decisions affecting the school may to a greater or lesser degree be dependent on personal objectives (which need not necessarily differ from those of the school or broader parent body). Personal priorities may include greater individual say in the decision-making process or a desire to enhance two way communication (via the board) between the school and parents. On the "push side", a lack of broader parental interest in involvement or a specific issue affecting the school may often encourage particular individuals to pick up the mantle of board membership. This appears to

reflect the findings of Brehony (1994) and Deem *et al* (1995) in their consideration of the operation of individuals on school governing bodies elsewhere.

The Nature And Range of Activity Discussed at Board Meetings

The responses from the boards indicated that there was a range of activity which was regularly (or at least fairly regularly) discussed at meetings in all schools. These included issues relating to the curriculum, decisions on the school budget and its subsequent monitoring, updates regarding staffing appointments, specifics relating to the school buildings and their maintenance and general issues relating to parent satisfaction with the running of the school. The majority of these issues relate to the day to day operation of the schools, with the role of the board being consultative, usually noting and inputting to verbal or written reports from the head teacher. The indication is that at all the study schools, meetings are used as forums for the head teacher to consult and communicate with the board as the voice of broader parent opinion. The extent to which the head teacher unofficially set the agenda for school board meetings was difficult to attain, although the predominance of management issues regularly discussed suggests a fair degree of influence.

Other more strategic issues were considered less frequently. These included school discipline, Regional policies and the direct and indirect effects of central government legislation on the running of the school. It is perhaps not surprising that such issues were considered less regularly. As with meetings of local authority committees, it might be anticipated that few items on the agenda will be concerned with strategic or policy options. Rightly or wrongly, the majority of issues invariably relate to ongoing performance (budgetary or otherwise) or more short term operational

issues. Only where schools were threatened with closure were strategic issues discussed at every meeting; and even then only until the immediate threat had receded. This does appear to contradict the "management" role envisaged by Macbeth (1990). "Management " is an ambiguous term which can be interpreted differently by different boards, but Macbeth generally regards it as including: defining school aims, planning strategy, allocating resources and staffing, and considering broader relationships outwith the school. Analysis suggests that Macbeth's (1990) definition may have been inappropriately defined prior to adequate "bedding in" of board operation, rather than the focus of boards themselves being incorrect.

At Cameron, the board "had felt it important to respond to issues coming from central government and the Region". Indeed, there were occasions when "the board could raise issues which staff had to keep to themselves". Similarly, the board at Ross sometimes felt that "it should take a political stance against some of the changes coming from the Government ... we used to respond to consultations but nothing much seemed to come of it". Such issues did not appear to have been discussed as frequently at the other schools in the study sample.

Responses indicated that the issues of parental choice, GMS and parental satisfaction with the board were seldom discussed. Whilst discussions on opting out appears only to have been aired in the vast majority of occasions in Scotland as a delaying tactic in the face of a closure threat, greater concerns arise from the failure to discuss placing requests and parent satisfaction. All schools in the sample had to a greater or lesser degree been affected by placing requests. Both Munro and Cameron had seen a proportionally large net increase in placing requests, whilst Frazer and Keith

had lost a significant number of pupils to other schools. Whilst the situation at Ross appeared at first glance to be more stable, there was still a significant number of inward and outward placing requests to contend with.

At Cameron, the board chairperson indicated that "there doesn't seem much need to discuss placing requests; they tend to happen and that's that. There's not much you could do even if you wanted to". With regard to parent satisfaction with the board, "people tend to be fairly quiet ... they'd let us know if they weren't happy".

At Ross, the issue of placing requests seemed only to be discussed when the loss or influx of pupils appeared to be "used as an excuse for a discipline or results issue faced by the school".

At Keith, the chairperson pointed out that "whilst parental choice is important and the loss of pupils has had an effect, there's not much to talk about on a regular basis". As for opting out, the board "might look at it if the school was going to be closed, but not other than that".

The chairperson at Frazer indicated that most parents weren't interested in the board, so it is "hard to tell if they aren't happy".

The making of placing requests has had perhaps the single most tangible effect on school rolls in urban areas. However, there are a number of possible explanations as to its absence as a regular topic for discussion at board meetings. Firstly, its absence may result from the accepted role of placing requests in secondary Education in Scotland. The issue has been on the political and managerial agenda in Scotland since 1981, considerably longer than in England and Wales (1988). Secondly, the board may consider that such issues have little direct effect on the quality of the educational

experience within the school. Whilst it might be considered that an influx of less able pupils may have a detrimental effect on school attainment, there is little tangible evidence to clearly point to a direct causal link; partly as a result of the breadth of backgrounds and abilities of pupils making placing requests and partly because of the difficulty in isolating individual pupil influence from the range of other factors in a school affecting attainment. Thirdly, it may be that boards consider placing requests to be an issue which they have to live with, and that regular discussion of the issue from a strategic perspective can achieve little other than the division of the broader parent body between those who have made a request and those who are resident in the catchment. This possibility would appear to be strengthened by the earlier observation regarding the regularity and extent to which boards generally discuss strategic issues. Finally, it is possible that there simply is not very much to say about the issue on an ongoing basis. Whatever the reason, it is important to note that regardless of its appearance on board meeting agendas, placing requests have had a disproportionately significant effect on the size and nature of many school rolls across the country. The attitudes of the board members interviewed to the principle and practice of parental choice are considered later in the chapter.

Perhaps of equal significance is the failure to consider parental satisfaction with the board on an ongoing basis. The democratic mandate of the boards as representatives of the broader parent body is attained via elections. All schools held elections in 1989. However, only two of the schools (Cameron and Keith) held elections in 1992. Other schools had to approach "volunteers" or slot nominees into uncontested positions to meet the statutory levels of parental involvement. The democratic mandate of the boards in the study sample was thus very weak, with many of the "volunteers" appearing to have been drawn from a group of parents who had

demonstrated most interest in school issues or had previously participated in the PTA in some capacity.

One of the most common criticisms aimed at school boards is that representation does not reflect the broader socio-economic make-up of the catchment. Only in Ross was this considered to be the case by respondents[7], where the lack of homogeneity in the catchment perhaps precluded this on practicable grounds. This view on representation was not shared by the head teacher at Ross. As discussed in Chapter 6, it seems somewhat tenuous to claim that a relevant link exists between the socio-economic background of board members *vis-à-vis* the rest of the catchment and the extent to which they are representative. Firstly, the absence of any democratic mandate (regardless of background) is more of a concern than the stereotypical alignment of individuals with certain groups. Secondly, the ability and desire of individual members to listen to parents and articulate their concerns would appear of far greater significance in terms of representation. Finally, the apparent lack of consultation with the parent body points to more tangible breakdown in representation than might be judged in terms of social alignment.

The degree to which boards can facilitate the intended Scottish Office objectives (outlined in the introduction) depends on the success of ongoing communication and consultation with parents as a whole. The failure of any of the boards sampled to address the adequacy of their operation suggests that either self-evaluation is not considered a particularly high priority or that board members have no reason to suspect a significant element of dissatisfaction. In saying that, up until recently, few elected or appointed bodies have regularly addressed satisfaction or popularity on an ongoing

[7] Although the rigour and objectivity of member analysis and feedback might generally be debatable on this issue.

basis. To that end, whilst such a process is desirable, it is perhaps questionable whether bodies such as school boards, suffering themselves from apparent public apathy, would take a lead on best practice in "user" consultation.

Liaising with the Parent Body and Parent Perception of Board Effectiveness

As highlighted above, the interview feedback has produced a degree of concern as to the extent of liaison between boards and the broader parent body. As has been discussed, boards were established by the Scottish Office with the intention that they fulfil two fundamental roles; the voice of the school in the community and the voice of the community in dealings with the school, the LEA or central government (in school related issues). In the absence of adequate liaison between the school and the community, both roles would seem to be fundamentally undermined. None of the interviewees or questionnaire respondents indicated that they had been approached more than once or twice over the last year by parents on a one-to-one basis regarding issues raised, or requested to be raised, by the board. Indeed, one respondent from Ross indicated that they had not been approached during their three years on the board. The trend did not seem to vary between study schools. In line with the findings of Brehony (1994) and Brigley (1994), this fundamentally questions the effectiveness of the boards as the voice of parents in particular schools.

Further concerns arise as a result of the apparent paucity of formal liaison between the board and parents as to issues arising at meetings. Whilst all boards produced newsletters on an *ad hoc* basis, parents were left to rely on minutes of meetings available in local libraries or through board members' attendance at parent

meetings to pick up on most issues discussed. No formal consultation with the parent body took place prior to issues being considered at any of the study schools.

The chairperson at Cameron did indicate that "there are always some people who think you're going about things the wrong way", implying an element of dissatisfaction with the operation of the board.

At Munro, the chairperson did not "have the impression that the board was going against any flow of parent opinion ... we're parents ourselves and as such are aware of most of the issues in some form or another".

However, in two of the five boards (Ross and Frazer), polarised responses on these issues were received from within the board. At Ross, the chairperson indicated that "it is difficult to fully represent the range of opinions, so the board has to act as its sees best to represent the majority view". Another respondent indicated simply that "people seem fairly happy with how things have been going".

At Frazer it was suggested that "there are many opinionated parents in the area, but seldom do they criticise the board directly ... you tend to hear about it through other people at other meetings". However, a further respondent from Frazer specifically expressed a gut feeling that the parent body did not agree generally with the method of representation that boards offered.

At Keith, criticism was indirect, with the chairperson indicating that they considered that a lot of parents felt some of the problems at the school could have been better dealt with by the board than had been the case in the past.

Disparities existed in the extent to which respondents perceived that the workings of the boards and communication with parents were effective. This was

anticipated from an inter-board perspective due to the discretion available to boards to decide upon their own focus and operation. Both schools in the top category of the hierarchy seemed fairly satisfied with their effectiveness. However, in both cases this appeared to be based on a "no news is good news" stance rather than informed opinion. Neither school had taken steps to assess parents' perception of the working of the board. The three other schools had also failed to undertake any broad trawl of parent views, but greater dissent within the boards and a perception amongst interviewees that some concerns existed were symptomatic of a heightened awareness of parental perception.

The comments appear to reflect a lack of confidence amongst board members as to their interface with the broader parent body; perhaps largely reflecting the absence of adequate consultation on a whole range of issues. Comments regarding parent satisfaction appeared to be based solely on a lack of criticism of their operation rather than on any formal communication with the parent body. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most blamed this lack of mutual understanding on the fact that parents were generally not interested in the board or the way it worked, implying that lack of input was more closely related to parent apathy than the effectiveness or otherwise of the communication mechanisms put in place by boards.

Whether or not this is accurate remains to be seen, with further consideration being given to the issue in Chapter 8. However, apathy towards local politics is generally considered to be problematic, and there are several explanations for the lack of parent interest in board activity. Firstly, there could indeed be a general apathy towards the board and its role in the decision-making process, reflecting a lack of interest in the issues discussed. Secondly, there could be a perception amongst parents that there is no requirement to make any direct input, reflecting a general level of

satisfaction with the board and a degree of trust in its ability to make informed decisions in the best interest of the broader parent body. Indeed, this was an opinion more regularly raised in the parental feedback (discussed in Chapter 8) than lack of interest. This might perhaps be expected, with parents reluctant to express disinterest in issues affecting their child(ren)'s schooling. Lack of interest might also reflect either futility about the capacity of the board (or individual board members) to progress issues regardless of the ability of its members. This seems unlikely, as parents seldom expressed concern about the limitations on board power/influence. It could be argued that this may be symptomatic of the apparent lack of parental understanding of the role and responsibilities of the board. Finally, it may be that the issues that the board deals with are considered to be of little direct relevance to parents on the majority of occasions. For example, there may be few occasions during the schooling of a child when issues other than those directly relating to that individual child's welfare are of sufficient interest to require parent involvement with the school. This last point is strengthened by the further consensus amongst respondents that parents tended to approach the head teacher rather than the board regarding specific issues relating to their child's education. This was borne out in the parental responses, raising serious concerns about the extent of broad and active parental participation in the service decision-making process through the board.

The lack of informed knowledge of parental perception was further emphasised by the assertion made in all responses that the views of boards conformed generally to those of the broader parental body. There appears no basis for this assertion other than gut feeling. Comments appeared to be grounded in the presumption that widespread dissatisfaction would have manifested itself in one of the following ways:

- parents would attend board meetings in significant numbers to raise their concerns;

- a substantial volume of correspondence would have been received by the board or the head teacher indicating dissatisfaction;
- more parents would have stood for election to the board;
- current members would have received greater opposition at board elections.

The absence of such a response was taken by board members to indicate general levels of satisfaction, although most conceded that there could be underlying reasons (such as a lack of interest or futility) which would produce similar responses from parents. As with the operation of other public bodies, it would be naive to assume lack of participation was predominantly an indicator of satisfaction.

There was a broadly shared perception across the study schools that boards offered parents a number of direct or indirect benefits. Despite the aforementioned evidence to the contrary, respondents indicated that boards kept parents informed of developments within the school, offering them a vehicle for participation if desired. Boards were considered to be essential mechanisms for increasing parents' understanding of the complexity of issues affecting the school (relating to changes in central or local government policies). In principle, head teachers supported this view of the useful role of boards, although it must be remembered that a number of head teachers (including those in some of the study schools) indicated that often these benefits did not materialise in practice.

Board Members' Perception of Recent Developments in Public Education

Parental Choice

As expected, there was a degree of variation in attitudes towards parental choice in general and the effects of placing requests on the individual study schools. Whilst all respondents agreed in principle with parents' right to make placing requests, differing concerns existed as to the practical implications. There was a great degree of overlap in opinion with head teachers. Respondents from Ross, Frazer and Keith expressed strong concerns about the effects of a loss of pupils from their schools as a result of outward placing requests. Conversely, and perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents from Munro and Cameron were perplexed about the effects of large numbers of incoming pupils from outwith the traditional catchment areas. Members from Munro tended to be predominantly concerned about the socio-economic background of incoming pupils and the resultant effect on the pupil profile, whereas respondents from Cameron were more concerned with the pressure of overcrowding within their school. This can perhaps be explained in terms of the traditionally high position of Munro in the school hierarchy in relation to the catchments of neighbouring schools within easy travelling distance. The socio-economic make-up of surrounding catchments is also more deprived than that of Munro. Such a differential is not so dramatically mirrored at Cameron and its surrounding catchments.

The Cameron chairperson described a form of socio-spatial hierarchy resulting from parental choice, whereby "an influx of the "better" pupils from a poorer school often results in outward placing requests from our better pupils, and so on up the ladder". He went on to liken the process to a form of suburbanisation whereby "the

best pupils in each school make placing requests to the neighbouring one further from the city centre". Whilst the specific "concentric zone" phenomenon failed to repeat itself in the other study areas (predominantly as a result of the location of some of the magnet schools in relation to poorer surrounding catchments), the suggestion of a form of social climbing through placing requests (outlined in Chapters 3 and 6) would appear to have a large degree of credence. On further prompting, the chairperson defined "better pupils" as those with "greater academic ability" or from households where parents were "more interested or more able to make decisions about the child's future education as a result of their own expectations". Whilst interesting in its own right in terms of board member stereotyping, this model may be a geographical expression of Gambetta's (1987) structuralist explanation of parental choice discussed in Chapter 3, where parents base their decisions on a range of interacting variables rather than solely push or pull factors from one school to another. This counters other assertions in Chapter 3 about the factors considered and the adequacy of information made available.

Opinions were broadly shared as to the key factors influencing parents' decisions to make placing requests. As with head teachers, parental perception was regarded as being a far greater motivation than reality. The chairperson from Cameron pointed out that "some parents think their kids will do better at Cameron, but whether they will or not I really don't know ... parents have a view of the school which is often not based on anything other than hearsay". Similarly, the chairperson at Keith stated that "other schools are often seen as more desirable, but for particular children that is not necessarily the case ... sometimes it all seems to be just flavour of the month ... one child leaves and all his friends seem to want to go too".

Disciplinary levels, attainment and pupil preference were identified as the principal push and pull factors, although other important issues quoted included the

school ethos (name, uniform and tradition) and the perceived quality of teachers. No apparent trends existed as to the weight placed on these by respondents from different schools. It should be noted that views were sought as to "key factors affecting the volume of placing requests in general", not those in specific schools. There is, however, a presumption that respondents to some degree based their answers on their own experience.

Surprisingly, none of the respondents indicated that they felt that parents were constrained by a lack of choice of Educational experience. Like head teachers, this indicates a commonly held perception amongst board members that a form of market exists within the state sector. Placing requests were seen as means of accessing a different experience at another school if this was deemed necessary. One respondent from Munro pointed out that "it was hardly surprising that parents from some of the surrounding areas wanted to send their children to a school with better (academic) results". At the other end of the spectrum, the chairperson at Keith felt it was understandable "if some pupils feel a bit held back by some of the difficulties in this school". Whilst it may have been expected that a number of respondents would refer to an alternative private sector provision, this was predominantly not the case. Indeed, it was only after further prompting that any respondent chose to comment on alternative private provision. Many respondents indicated that cost made private Education unattainable even if desirable. This is perhaps a more likely explanation for the initial absence of references than a presumption that the experience at private schools did not differ from that in the state sector. Interestingly, there was a broadly held preference amongst respondents to continue their child's education at the establishment already selected. This was based on a number of expressed reasons including faith in the teachers at the current school, knowledge and related understanding of the operation of

the establishment and a presumed bias towards an institution in which they had invested a substantial amount of time and energy.

Devolution of Responsibilities to Head Teachers

Decentralisation of elements of the control of Education management to schools falls under one of two headings: issues related to budgetary devolution (DMR) or those tied to decisions regarding staff appointments. Whilst DMR was still in the early stages of implementation at the time of the interviews, all respondents indicated substantial potential arising from devolution of budgetary control to school level. The role of the boards in agreeing the school budget in Scottish schools is solely consultative, with responsibility vested in the hands of the individual head teachers. At the time of the study, there was still limited discretion available to head teachers to vire between cost headings, thereby allowing them the autonomy over budgetary decisions they may have liked (and the Scottish Office intended). Nonetheless, only the board chairperson at Ross was concerned by the role of the head teacher in the process, feeling that "the limited role of boards (compared to governing bodies in England) means the head teacher is in a far stronger position than may be considered healthy ... Board members should have the same responsibilities as their English counterparts when it comes to agreeing the budget, if only to make sure the head teacher is aware of parent priorities".

These particular comments suggest a problem with the limitations of boards' consultative role rather than a specific difficulty with the principle of budgetary devolution. Whether they follow a practical disagreement at Ross or a general concern regarding the powers of head teachers was not alluded to. Nonetheless, it was not an issue that was raised by other board members, all of whom indicated they welcomed

increased participation in the budgetary process and felt that the current arrangements ensured an adequate element of head teacher accountability. (Interestingly, responses to other prompts (discussed earlier) suggests that this chain of accountability may stop at the boards rather than extend to the broader parent body). The desire of board members for any additional powers or responsibilities relating to budgetary decisions or monitoring was extremely limited. It should be borne in mind that at the time of responding, board members would not be particularly used to working within the DMR scheme. It would perhaps be unfair to expect detailed comments on its success in practice as opposed to the broadly expressed preference for devolved working in principle. Nonetheless, all respondents did indicate that discussions around the school budget were regularly on the agenda for board meetings.

A similar caveat could be applied to the devolution of decisions about staff appointments. Again their was broad agreement in principle. For example, the chairperson at Munro pointed out that "any opportunity to match candidates to the needs of the school should be welcomed". Similarly, one respondent from Frazer indicated that "the old system was far too bureaucratic ... how can someone at HQ know what each school needs?". Bearing in mind its position in the schools' hierarchy the further comment from a Frazer respondent should perhaps not be unexpected. He suggested that "some teachers came here that seemed totally unsuited to the demands of the school ... letting the school be more involved in decisions is bound to stop that happening".

The ability of individual schools to select suitable teachers on the grounds of experience, attitude and the needs of the particular establishment were the most regularly quoted benefits. One respondent from Cameron pointed to efficiency savings for the Regional Council as a result of the process, indicating that benefits were not

restricted to the schools and their pupils. None of the respondents indicated any concerns about the decision. The views of board members closely reflected those of head teachers on the matter.

Respondents were split on the extent to which devolution of staff appointments was an issue for head teachers rather than boards. Many indicated that whilst they welcomed the move they had no interest in becoming involved personally in selection decisions. Some respondents did suggest that parent involvement would be a good thing in selection interviews as it would produce a more balanced outcome. One respondent from Ross indicated that parents were often "looking for different qualities in a teacher than Educationalists". This stance outlines the extent to which the board may be seen as complementing the role of the head teacher as well as supporting it. However, the desire for lack of personal involvement in selection decisions poses a problem in terms of head teacher accountability. As indicated by head teachers in the previous Chapter, participation in the selection process by school board members has been extremely limited. As a result, whilst head teachers are more managerially accountable for the decisions made, the link to the parent body is often fragmented by lack of board participation.

Grant Maintained Status (GMS)

Board members unanimously supported the views of the head teachers in opposing the process of opting out. Interestingly, they appeared generally unaware of the experiences of GMS schools in England (referred to in the equivalent section in Chapter 6). As a result, many of the expressed fears appear to have been unfounded on analysis of actual experience south of the Border. It might be hypothesised that their

concerns appeared to reflect ideological opposition to the principle of GMS and support (once again) for the views of the head teacher.

Many quoted the idea as being politically driven and funded, whilst offering little medium to long term benefits for any school choosing to proceed to such status. The chairperson at Munro suggested "it would be naive to imagine that the initial support would be there after the first couple of years". One respondent from Ross felt that "we might be okay in the first instance because we'd be seen as some sort of Tory flagship ... but what would happen if there was a change in government?". Potential increases in resource availability in the short term was the only quoted benefit that opting out was seen to offer. Where this was mentioned, scepticism existed as to whether the level of initial support would be maintained.

Broader concerns were also raised about the implications of opting-out for the comprehensive Education system in an area, supporting the fears of head teachers as to the apparent dangers of the operation of market principles as a major influence on public service provision. The chairperson at Munro supported his earlier comments by suggesting that the Regional Council might have "real problems if all its better schools opted-out ... Whether you agree with it or not, there needs to be some way of ensuring that resources are diverted into the poorer areas". Such responses indicate opposition to the concept of supply-side deregulation of Educational opportunities, reflecting the earlier comments regarding satisfaction about the range of "experiences" available to choose from within the state sector. This points to a desire amongst respondents for a limited or *pseudo*-market rather than open competition between different sectors. The comments also point to support for continuation of the redistributive capacity of local government.

None of the respondents saw GMS as an option for their school in the foreseeable future, although the chairperson at Cameron indicated that he was concerned about the future of the school after Local Government Reorganisation in 1996. He stated that "Reorganisation may change the relationship between the school and the local authority, especially if the new Glasgow Council finds difficulties in funding its Education system as effectively as Strathclyde managed to. If that happens, opting out may become more of an issue". This does not appear to have occurred to date, although the loss of a more extensive tax base and subsequent ability to redistribute revenue has been a major issue for the new unitary authority.

Interestingly, the greatest perceived disadvantages arising from opting out in the minds of those interviewed related to its effects on staff rather than pupils. This mirrored the concerns of head teachers. A respondent from Ross pointed to the "real detrimental effects on staff morale", whilst the chairperson at Munro felt that an opted out school "would be less concerned about investing in staff development" than a larger local authority pooling staffing skills and experience. Both regarded there would be indirect consequences for pupils as a result of reduced teacher commitment. The chairperson at Frazer raised further concerns about the effects of a debate on opting out at a school on the relationship between staff and parents, indicating that a balance had to be reached between the implications of opting out on teachers' careers and the perceived benefits to service consumers. Whilst advocating that the benefits to pupils should be the deciding factor, he felt the matter had to be treated sensitively and not considered solely because "it was a new idea that offered short term cash benefits or delayed closure". The issue of avoiding closure was also raised by the chairperson at Keith who stated that "we hope it won't come to that, but I don't envisage even the

Scottish Office would let us get away with it anyway". He did agree that it might be a useful short term delaying tactic in the event of threatened closure.

The Volume and Pace of Change

The majority of respondents shared head teachers' concerns about the volume and pace of change in public Education. Others were supportive of the need for change[8] whilst still expressing reservations about specific policy initiatives. The chairperson from Cameron felt that change in public Education was necessary and "arguably long overdue", indicating that his main worry was that change was not being allowed to bed in before policy was reviewed again. With regard to Educational changes such as 5-14 and Higher Still, the volume of change was perceived as leaving teachers in a position where they had to regularly revise teaching methods without having the opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of the last set of measures. Lesser criticism was aimed at the Education management initiatives such as DMR, parental choice and the establishment of boards. Only opting out received widespread opposition on the grounds mentioned earlier.

Interestingly (and perhaps coincidentally), board member support for new initiatives decreased with the distance decisions were taken from the school. Crudely, there was far more support for change initiated by head teachers in each school than for that emanating from Regional HQ. Likewise, there was greater hostility to decisions taken by national government than those taken by the Regional Council. Whilst this arguably reflects defensive responses to externally imposed change, it also may also say

[8] This was expressed in concerns about the inflexibility of the LEA prior to many of the reforms and perceptions of stagnation in teaching methods within schools.

something about the whole principle of subsidiarity, or at least public perception of the principle. In short, civil society may be more sympathetic to decisions taken locally than to those taken in apparent isolation from afar.

Inter-Category Differences in Board Member Perception

Very few inter-category differences in board member perception were apparent from the responses and subsequent analysis. This points to the focus and role of the boards as drivers and gatekeepers of change being linked more to the attitudes, abilities and actions of individual board members (and those of the head teacher) than to the socio-economic characteristics of the catchment or overall attainment levels within the school. In saying that, the implications of these contextual factors were significant in shaping some opinions. For example, the perceived success of the imposed Education management initiatives varied dependent on their implications for the school. In the case of parental choice, the effects of placing requests on overall attainment levels, discipline and the pupil profile seemed to be of concern at the top of the hierarchy, with the future viability of the school and the loss of better performing pupils an issue at the bottom. There appeared to be a fair degree of consistency of opinion across the study schools regarding the remaining initiatives. Devolution of decisions on school budgets and staff appointments were generally supported, with all respondents indicating serious concerns about the benefits of opting-out.

Whilst the range of activity considered by all the boards in the sample study appeared to be fairly consistent, variations existed in the focus of board attention within that range. Again, this did not appear to be determined by each school's position in the

hierarchy. The attitudes, abilities and priorities of board members in the different schools again seemed more significant, with variations in emphasis appearing to reflect particular issues or challenges faced by each school. The extent to which board emphasis reflected the priorities of the broader parent communities in each catchment is extremely debatable in light of the apparent lack of communication between the boards and parents. It would be naive to suggest that an alignment between the socio-economic backgrounds of parent members and the broader catchment counters this lack of representation. Indeed, it could be argued that the absence of links with catchment communities manifests itself in the apparent lack of distinction in perceptions between parent members from schools in the different categories.

There appeared a large degree of consistency between the perceptions of board members and the head teacher in each school. With few exceptions, the boards appeared to predominantly fulfil a supporting role in their dealings with the head teacher and school staff, trusting in their experience on the majority of occasions. In each of the study schools the head teacher welcomed the role played by the board in facilitating an element of parent input (although the adequacy of boards as mechanisms for such participation was of greater concern). The head teacher appeared to be in a position to influence the operation and focus of the board as a result of his/her pivotal role in the LEA/school/parent relationship. The Regional Council's chosen route of managerial decentralisation appeared to strengthen this position, although the head teacher appeared (and felt) more able to be held to account by the board than in the past. A number of chairpeople took the opportunity to indicate that the head teachers opinion was not accepted in all instances, pointing to a valid role for the board in maintaining accountability. The power differential between head teacher and board still appeared predominantly to be in favour of the head teacher, with variations at each

school dependent on the drive and ability of each player. Indeed, the relationship appeared not unlike that on local authority committees, with recommendations from appointed officers being ratified or rejected by Elected Members. The main distinction (although some might argue otherwise) appears to be the absence of a democratic mandate for boards in the majority of secondary schools in the city.

Relationships within boards appeared to be less consistent. Whilst none of the respondents openly pointed to in-fighting, an element of factionalisation (as identified by Macbeth, 1990) was apparent at three of the five study schools (those in the middle or lower part of the hierarchy). This manifested itself in polarised perceptions of the adequacy of board representation and operation expressed in the questionnaire returns. Whether the concentration in the lower and middle categories was coincidence or not is open to question. However, all three catchments were in some way distinctive. That of Ross displayed less homogeneity in socio-economic or ethnic background than perhaps any other in the city, nurturing a range of strongly expressed factional views on the board. Similarly, each of the two schools from the lowest part of the hierarchy had catchments characterised by a high degree of political activity[9], perhaps reflected in factionalisation and/or more heated debate and discussion at board meetings. Attitudes within each of the boards from schools from the top category of the hierarchy appeared more stable and consistent. Again, this may have been purely coincidental.

Feedback pointed to relationships between the boards and the broader parent body at all study schools being poor, except on occasions where the board had championed a commonly held cause (such as opposition to closure or school merger). The consistency of this relationship across the hierarchy will become more apparent

[9] This is reflected in the higher levels of interest group participation and political party membership expressed in the parental questionnaire responses (discussed in Chapter 8).

following analysis of the parent feedback. There appeared an almost complete lack of communication between all of the boards and parents, largely perceived by board members as stemming directly or indirectly from broad parent apathy. Whilst this might be the case, both the adequacy of boards as mechanisms for participation and the underlying reasons behind parent apathy require further investigation.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the specific attitudes of parent members of the school boards in the five selected study schools. It has assessed their perceptions of both the need for and success of the changes in Education management introduced during the 1980s and early 1990s. It has also deduced a number of conclusions about the power and influence of the boards *vis-à-vis* head teachers in the selected study schools and suggested that, due to the absence of effective communications, boards have done little to empower the broader parent bodies in each area.

Whilst there was general parent member support in principle for both central and local government initiatives (with the exception of GMS), concerns were raised about the volume/pace of the changes introduced and their implications for particular schools. There appear little inter-category patterns to overall perceptions, with the particular concerns in each school and the attitude and ability of individual board's members influencing priorities within a shared range of topics across all of the study schools.

Boards generally appeared to fulfil a minimalist but supportive role in their relationships with head teachers at each school. Whilst some variation on board input and perception occurred dependent on specific issues, the drive of members and the

personality of the head teacher, the recommendations of school staff appeared to be accepted on the majority occasions. Although head teacher activity was undoubtedly checked to various degrees by each board, s/he undoubtedly appeared to be the key player in the local Education arena. Whilst the existence and activity of the board produced an element of head teacher accountability, this was undoubtedly weakened by the lack of parent member desire for any increase in the extent or range of responsibilities and inadequate links with the broader parent body. In addition, by acting as a check on the activity of the LEA, the relative power of the school was enhanced. This provided a further opportunity for head teachers to strengthen their influence and control.

Links with the broader parent body in all of the study schools appeared poor. Whilst the board members perceived that parents on the whole were satisfied with their performance and felt informed of developments within the school, there seemed to be insufficient communication to justify such an opinion. To a large degree, this conclusion appears to have been drawn from a general lack of opposition to board activity rather than any assessment of parent satisfaction or understanding. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 8, parent perceptions in the study schools strengthen this argument.

As a result of the feedback discussed in the chapter, the extent to which boards fulfil the roles envisaged for them by the Scottish Office (1989a and 1989b) appears extremely questionable. In short, whilst they facilitate an element of parental participation in the school decision-making process and provide a check on head teacher activity, they fail to act adequately as either the voice of parents in the school or the voice of the school in the broader parent community. Their existence appears to some extent to frustrate the Scottish Office intentions by appeasing both aims. Board

existence appears to reduce the frequency by which the head teacher has to consult the broader parent body, arguably acting as a further hurdle to direct parent involvement in the decision-making process (as argued by Bogdanowicz, 1994). In short, boards appear to act more as consultative bodies for head teachers than facilitators of broader participative democracy. In saying that, head teacher feedback suggest that the apparent "apathy" of the broader parent body means that there has been little alternative parental participation at schools where boards have had to be dissolved due to lack of interest. Regardless, school boards appear to have a negligible (perhaps even negative) impact on the extent of general parent empowerment.

The extent to which boards facilitate democratic involvement in the school decision-making process therefore currently appears minimal. In addition to the inadequacies of board/parent communication and liaison referred to above, the infrequency of elections and extremely low turnout largely undermines any representative mandate which board members may claim to hold. The extent to which this can be overcome within existing channels appears to be debatable. Indeed, it could be argued that parents themselves are largely to blame for the non-representative nature of board members. The next chapter examines the extent of parent interest or understanding in the role of boards, suggesting that an alternative approach may need to be devised to ensure effective parent participation in the Education decision-making process.

Recent proposals suggest that this may indeed be forthcoming. In early 1998, the Scottish Office consulted on proposals to transfer a raft of responsibilities from local authority to school board control. The Scottish Office consultation document "Parents as Partners" (Scottish Office, 1998b) suggests that boards should have full control over schools' devolved budgets and key elements of schools' operational policy.

The main tenets of the proposals are outlined in Figure 7.1. The proposals are part of a Europe-wide project investigating parent involvement in all aspects of the Education management process.

Figure 7.1 - Brief Summary of the "Parents as Partners" Proposals

The Scottish Office consultaion document "Parents as Partners" proposes altering the role of boards, with additional powers and responsibilities being transferred to them from the LEA. These may include:

- agreeing and managing the budget,
- monitoring and reviewing school performance,
- overseeing the appointment of staff, and
- deciding on school policy (on homework, uniform, discipline).

Parents and citizens will be expected to input through the board, with board mandate and accountability being strengthened as a result. This will leave a more minimalist operational role for the local authority, encouraged to increasingly focus on strategic issues such as local educational planning and inspection and the provision of required support services.

The absence of a democratic mandate, school management skills and effective liaison with the parent body become of increasing concern, although it is acknowledged that the proposals are aimed at strengthening these links and skills. Opponents[10] have initially criticised as a throwback to Conservative policies in Education, combining with

[10] EIS and the Scottish Parent Teachers' Association (Herald, 20 April, 1998)

devolved budgeting to produce a *de facto* opt out. This is seen as fragmenting the LEA system and pitching school against school. Closer analysis points to moves to strengthen the accountability of local schools and enhance local participation and ownership, thus moving some way down the road towards effective community empowerment. Poor links with parents point to a danger of elite sectionalism - some steps will need to be taken to ensure that this is minimised. Further consideration is given to the proposals in Chapter 11.

To some degree, boards could increasingly become drivers and gatekeepers of change within schools. The chairperson in particular is already able to determine the focus of the board and its relationship with the head teacher in affecting school direction and ethos. Whilst the supportive role adopted by boards suggests the head teacher is currently the primary player within a school, the attitudes and abilities of board members will influence the nature of the board/head teacher relationship. Even by supporting the head teacher, the board is assisting in the change process if not primarily responsible for setting the agenda.

The chapter has informed further conclusions on the socio-political, Education management and geographical research questions outlined in Figures 5.1 and 5.4. Chapter 8 now goes on to consider parental perceptions of the recent changes prior to final conclusions on each of the research questions being drawn in Chapters 9 and 10.

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Chapter 8 - The Parent Perspective

Chapter 6 examined the perceptions of head teachers to the New Right agenda, resultant central government initiatives and the local authority response (as it impinged on each school). It investigated the extent to which head teachers acted as gatekeepers or drivers of change within each school depending on the position of the individual concerned in an "innovators/compliers/laggards" typology. It also considered their impressions of the effectiveness of school boards and the relationship with the broader parent body. Chapter 7 assessed the opinions of school board parent members from the sample study schools on the same range of issues, drawing comparisons with the views of head teachers and assessing the relationships between boards and the broader parent body. Again the attitudes and abilities of board members was considered, as was the position of the school in the hierarchy mentioned earlier. Fundamental contextual information on the operation of the board at each study school was also assessed.

This chapter outlines the final part of the jigsaw, considering the views of parents as to the range of issues discussed in previous chapters and their perceptions of the roles and effectiveness of head teachers and school boards. It examines whether the attitudes and actions of parents varied between the study schools, considering if any inter or intra-locale trends were apparent and whether or not these reflected the position of the school in the hierarchy.

Informed by the responses from each element of the field work, Chapter 9 integrates the conclusions drawn from each element of the fieldwork against the socio-political and Education management research questions (outlined in Figure 1.2[1]).

[1] and repeated in Figure 5.1

Chapter 10 considers the implications of these conclusions on each locale and the overall socio-political geography of the city.

Methodology

A short questionnaire was developed based on the issues highlighted in the earlier literature review chapters and the particular points made by the head teachers and school board members. A copy is attached as Appendix 8.1. Each of the sample schools agreed to participate in the issuing and collection of the questionnaire on the basis that the task would not be onerous on staff time. To this end, it was decided to restrict the sample to first and fourth year pupils in each school. Data from the Scottish Office (1998a) implies that parents making placing requests are likely do so at the stage where pupils transfer from primary to secondary school. It was therefore considered that the first year at each school (comprising pupils typically aged 11 to 12) could well contain the highest levels of recently made placing requests. It was also taken for granted that parents of fourth, fifth and sixth year pupils at each school would have the greatest experience of the range of ongoing issues and initiatives affecting that particular establishment. On the basis that the fifth and sixth years of schools at the lower end of the hierarchy tended to be both relatively and proportionally smaller than those at the higher end, it was decided to sample the parents of fourth year pupils (typically aged 15 to 16) to ensure that a sufficient volume of responses were received from each school for inferences to be drawn. The smaller size of fifth and sixth years in the lowest category was based on both the greater likelihood for pupils in those schools to leave earlier and the smaller roles of these schools compared to those at the other end of the hierarchy.

The questionnaires were issued in mid-February 1995, with parents given three weeks to complete and return them. It was presumed that leaving it until later in the school year would have caused some overlap with examinations, meaning that the attention of staff, parents and pupils may be focused elsewhere. Similarly, the earlier issuing of the questionnaire would not have allowed sufficient time for the parents of the first year pupils sampled to assess the culture and operation of the school.

Of the 1299 questionnaires issued, a total of 471 were completed and returned (broken down between individual schools as outlined in Table 8.1). Whilst the percentage response rates were adequate in terms of typical methodological expectations, the actual number of responses received from each school places an element of doubt on the validity of any apparent correlations between sub-samples. In light of this, correlations have been used predominantly to support or question qualitative information from head teachers, board members and the literature on potentially relevant inter-relationships in and between the study schools. Whilst this must be borne in mind when considering the relevance of particular findings, the underlying trends drawn from frequency counts allow substantive conclusions to be drawn as a result of the exercise.

Teachers in each of the first and fourth year form classes issued questionnaires to pupils on the Monday of the first week, with a request for parents to complete and return them as soon as possible. Pupils were reminded of the request for responses on the following two Mondays. Both teachers and parents were issued with background information as to the nature of the research and the important links with other parts of the overall study work. The returned questionnaires were collected from the school on the Friday of the third week.

Table 8.1 - Parent Questionnaire Response Rates

School	**Category**	**Issued**	**Returned**	**% Completed**
Munro	Top	307	122	40
Cameron	Top	398	147	37
Ross	Middle	187	60	32
Keith	Bottom	176	59	33
Frazer	Bottom	231	83	36
Total/*Mean*		**1299**	**471**	***36***

A draft of the questionnaire was circulated to the head teachers and school board chairpeople at each of the study schools for comment on focus, content and wording. Whilst there was consensus on the focus and content, a few minor amendments were made on the wording of particular questions to reduce potential misunderstanding amongst parents. As a result, the final questions were worded in such a manner as to minimise (as far as possible) their ambiguity to parents. Attempts were therefore made to recognise the range of backgrounds from which pupils were drawn. The questions focused significantly on the range and effectiveness of the various means of parental involvement in school management, assessing parents' knowledge of the various channels of communication open to them and gauging opinions as to their adequacy. The initial questions in the questionnaire requested responses on parental knowledge of the role of the school board, the extent of communication with it and perception of its effectiveness as an advocate of parental concerns. This was followed by a further series of questions regarding parental perception of their involvement in a range of issues relating to management of the school and a tick list intended to allow

assessment of whom they would contact first in the event that they were unhappy with an aspect of the school's operation.

The third major section provided parents with a matrix where they could agree or disagree with a series of statements covering the choice of Educational experiences available to them, the extent to which they felt effectively represented by the board and the degree to which they felt their views were taken into account as part of the decision-making process. Further specific questions were aimed at evaluating the extent to which parents might by-pass the board and make direct contact with the head teacher and the extent of and underlying reasoning behind the making of placing requests. Finally, a series of profile questions covering demographic, socio-economic and community participation issues were posed to facilitate an element of inter and intra-catchment analysis against the range of responses obtained elsewhere in the questionnaire.

Whilst the closed nature of the questionnaire ensured that parents' responses were channelled into a set of pre-determined categories, it did to some extent prevent parents from making more detailed comments on each of the areas covered. However, the resource constraints on the research prevented the closed responses from being supplemented through a large number of detailed face to face interviews. In addition, a focus on qualitative open-ended research at the initial stage of this element of the fieldwork would not have allowed the detailed analysis of trends within and between school catchments apparent from the volume of responses and the subsequent use of quantitative techniques. The closed nature of the questions minimised the ambiguity of the questionnaire, giving parents an indication of the type of response that was anticipated. More generally, the use of a generic questionnaire across all study schools

ensured that both consistency of questioning was maintained and a large number of parents could be trawled for their opinions.

The resultant volume of responses allowed quantitative analysis[2] to be undertaken on the variables to establish whether trends and correlations existed within and between catchments. In addition to frequency counts of responses and the breakdown of these into percentages, non-parametric tests were run on the data collected, resulting in the identification of three degrees or levels of correlation. Chi square tests were run on variables displaying at least the minimum criteria to make the tests valid. This identified a number of chi-square correlations significant at either the 5% or 10% significance levels. On those variables failing to meet the minimum chi-square test criteria, weaker Phi/Cramer analysis was undertaken to illustrate whether less definitive correlations existed. As a result, three "strengths" of correlation are referred to in the analysis which follows:

- [a] - chi-square correlations relevant at the 5% significance level;
- [b] - chi-square correlations relevant at the 10% significance level; and
- [c] - Phi/Cramer correlations.

Details of the outcomes of all the tests are discussed in the body of the chapter.

Tests were run on all questionnaire response variables where subjective assessment suggested that correlations appeared possible and relationships meaningful. School by school correlations at each level are listed in Appendix 8.2. This was intended to ensure analysis of parents' perception of the effectiveness of the opportunities for participation and subsequent use of these as a means of becoming involved. In short, attitude and action were correlated to assess whether consistencies existed between opinion and related response. Further tests were undertaken to

[2] Using SPSS for Windows software.

establish whether certain types of attitude and action were more or less likely depending on demographic or socio-economic background or tendency to participate in other forms of community involvement. The results indicate a complex environment in each locality, where a range of variables interact to determine the extent and nature of parental involvement. These are discussed in detail in the body of the chapter, with an assessment of the underlying explanations of the apparent trends and a comparison of the situation between the sample schools selected in the study.

The closed nature of the questions precludes the continuation of the format adopted in the previous two chapters. In both these cases, general comments were supplemented with specific quotes from each of the study schools. This chapter considers the volume of responses to each of the questions posed, analyses the extent of correlations between these and draws inferences informed by the responses to the profiling section of the questionnaire and other primary and secondary data[3] collected earlier in the research.

Parent Questionnaire Feedback - Analysis of Responses

A breakdown of the profiling information taken from the completed questionnaires provides essential contextual information for the detailed analysis of responses. The following variables were examined in an attempt to gauge the socio-economic, demographic and residential characteristics of respondents:

- length of residence
- family size (number of children *in the family*)

[3] Primary qualitative information from practitioners, board members and the literature; secondary data from school handbooks and Scottish Office/Strathclyde Regional Council statistical bulletins.

- single parent status
- occupation of main earner
- community group membership
- political party membership
- tendency to vote in local elections
- post code

From the resultant information, it was possible to devise a relatively detailed profile for each school. This is summarised in Table 8.2. In addition, it was also possible to cross-tabulate the profiling responses with the attitudes and actions prevalent in the body of the questionnaire to determine whether any significant and relevant correlations existed.

The profiling questions were selected in an attempt to provide an holistic picture of socio-economic background and tendency to participate. A number of other factors could have been selected to supplement this information. These include uptake of clothing grants/free school meals, household income and the educational attainment of parents. However, it was considered unethical to raise these issues[4]. Instead, it has been assumed that the profiling questions will have generated a breadth of data which gives a substantive indication of socio-economic background and participative tendencies without breaching these ethical boundaries. The data received has been considered in light of secondary data on socio-economic status by Enumeration District (drawn from the 1991 Census), actual levels of local authority and school board voter turnout and placing requests, and the qualitative input from teachers and school board parent members. This has been done in an attempt to validate the assumptions made

[4] it may also have reduced response rates from those on low incomes or from low attainment households

about the accuracy of the quantitative profiling data and provide sufficient contextual information to inform the conclusions resulting from its analysis.

A number of questions arose as to the validity of the data received, justifying the adoption of supporting contextual information. For example, responses indicating community and political participation are unexpectedly high. For example, the average % voter turnout in local government elections in Scotland has seldom risen above 50% since 1975. This points to "inaccuracies" in respondents' perceptions of their tendency to vote. It may also partly reflect the tendency for more participative individuals to complete the questionnaire in the first place. For weighting purposes, it has been assumed that the figures are all equally over-emphasised, with the trend across the study schools being proportionally equivalent to that indicated in the responses.

In addition to concerns about the accuracy of the data, a further issue relates to the likelihood of some bias in the responses received. For example, the level of respondents who had made placing requests at all of the study schools (especially Cameron and Munro) was significantly higher than the actual proportion of placing request pupils at each school. Responses from Frazer on community group membership point to a similar issue, with an unlikely high proportion of respondents indicating some form of involvement. This suggests that it is the most active parents who tend to respond, skewing the figures and arguably pointing to a higher level of interest and understanding than is actually the case. Whilst this in itself is not deemed to significantly undermine the nature of the conclusions drawn, it does question the "representativeness" of the sample. It also cannot be assumed that the extent of this phenomenon is consistent across all study catchments.

Table 8.2 - Parent Respondent Profile Information by Study School

Criterion	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Length of residence (yrs)	%	%	%	%	%
< 1	0.7	4.5	1.8	0.0	1.2
1-3	3.4	9.8	8.8	6.9	6.0
3-5	8.7	9.8	10.5	8.3	4.8
> 5	85.9	73.2	75.4	83.3	83.3
Number of children	%	%	%	%	%
1	17.4	12.5	8.8	13.9	15.5
2	44.3	47.3	42.1	44.4	34.5
3	27.5	23.2	33.3	26.4	25.0
≥ 4	10.1	15.2	15.8	9.7	23.8
single parent respondents	% 20.1	% 21.4	% 29.8	% 40.3	% 44.0
Occupation of main earner:	%	%	%	%	%
- petty bourgeoisie	8.1	4.5	3.5	0.0	1.2
- working class	12.8	21.4	28.1	23.6	28.6
- foremen and technicians	9.4	5.4	5.3	4.2	1.2
- the salariat	33.6	37.5	8.8	2.8	3.6
- routine non-manual	13.4	8.9	5.3	8.3	3.6
- housewife/unemployed/ student	14.1	17.0	43.9	43.1	46.4
community group members	% 12.1	% 11.6	% 10.5	% 6.9	% 23.8
% political party members	2.7	2.7	5.3	5.6	4.8
% vote in council elections	87.2	87.5	78.9	86.1	85.7

In an attempt to alleviate the effects of these issues, consideration of responses throughout the questionnaire has been "weighted" to acknowledge the following factors:

- more affluent parents are more likely to respond to the questionnaire than the norm;
- more affluent parents are more able to make an informed response;
- parents who tend to participate will be more likely to respond;
- unemployed parents may have more time to respond;
- most parents may want to be seen to be acting in a manner which might be seen to be "positive", "responsible", "appropriate" or "admirable" regardless of whether this reflects actual behaviour (e.g. voting, being involved in community groups, liaising with the school when necessary, understanding how the board works, etc.).

Residential Factors

A brief summary of the socio-economic and residential nature of each of the selected study school catchments is given towards the end of Chapter 5. The profiling information validated the conclusions drawn from initial consideration of the Census data. In short, socio-economic and demographic variations existed between catchments[5]. In terms of length of residence, there were no particular trends apparent from the feedback which appeared causally linked to the social ecology of the city. However, respondents from Munro and Ross (from the top and middle categories in the hierarchy respectively) had typically lived in the area for shorter periods than the norm

[5] The term "catchment" is used in this instance to describe the areas from which pupils are drawn, not the designated catchment area identified by the Regional Council. Note that the vast majority of pupils still attend designated schools.

at the other study schools. Such a trend may be closely linked to the higher turnover of population in a distinctive area of the city surrounding Glasgow University. This area has arguably a high proportion of better educated, more mobile individuals than may be found elsewhere. It also has a high proportion of private rented accommodation, with a relatively transient population as a result.

Table 8.3[6] - Correlations Between "Length of Residence" and Other Variables

Variable	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Making a placing request		√[a]			
Contact with the board	√[a]	√[a]			√
Contact with the head			√		
Knowledge of:					
- parents on the board	√[a]				
- what the board does			√[a]		
- how to contact board	√[a]				
Opinion about:					
- their say on schools policy	√	√			
- discipline				√	√[b]
- availability of choice				√[b]	√
- which teachers to employ	√				
- faith in school staff					√[b]
- whether the school listens			√		

Population turnover in the remaining three areas appeared to be more stable, with Cameron in particular showing a low level of turnover. Perhaps of greatest interest is the lack of consistency between Munro and Cameron, where areas with

[6] √ represents √[c] throughout this chapter

similar socio-economic characteristics display diverse residential patterns in terms of population turnover. This points to the inadequacy of any deterministic statements causally linking length of residence with socio-economic factors.

Examination of the correlation between length of residence and other variables provided some interesting results across the study schools. These are shown in Table 8.3. Those residents who had lived longest in the area were often less likely to have a specific opinion about the running of the school, know how to contact the board or claim to have had any contact with it or the head teacher. At Munro, they were also less likely to have made a placing request (although this finding would have been expected if they had lived in the area for a considerable period of time). These findings were perhaps unexpected, with the orthodox anticipation being that those with the longest ties with an area would be most interested in the activity of the local school (and other local institutions). However, length of residence would likely be considered to be more of a factor in determining local allegiance, commitment to the welfare and upkeep of the area and knowledge of the community at large rather than a determinant of more individualistic behaviour associated with the consumption of a local service during the limited period where an individual's child(ren) attended the local school. It may be that a degree of either apathy or acceptance creeps in to both parents' attitudes and actions relating to the school once they have lived in the area for a certain period of time, regardless of the background of parents or the apparent effectiveness of the school/board. However, it is more likely that either length of residence is an insignificant factor or that those newest to the area are more likely to seek knowledge and understanding of their new surroundings. On the whole, it is worth noting that such relationships were typically weak (Phi Cramer level correlations at most study schools; except where indicated otherwise in Table 8.3).

To conclude, there appeared to be little link between length of residence and the socio-economic background of the school catchment areas. Only in fairly "unique" areas around Glasgow University did any particular trend become apparent. However, the relatively weak correlation between attitude/action and length of residence is deemed to be insignificant in nature and inappropriate in focus as a determinant of parental allegiance to a local area. In addition, the small sub samples limit the emphasis which can be placed on the results of the correlation analysis.

Family Size and Parental Status

Whilst no apparently significant trends were evident in patterns of family size (or family size as a variable affecting other attitudes/actions) between the study school areas, disparities did exist in the prevalence of one parent families. These reflected both the underlying socio-economic background of the catchments and the school's position in the hierarchy (factors which are not mutually exclusive). Over 40% of respondents from Frazer and Keith - schools from the lowest part of the hierarchy - were single parents. This fell to around 30% in Ross - from the middle of the hierarchy - and around 20% at Munro and Cameron.

Table 8.4 - Proportion of Respondents who were Single Parents

	Cameron	**Munro**	**Ross**	**Keith**	**Frazer**
Single Parents	20.1%	21.4%	29.8%	40.3%	44.0%

A number of further trends were forthcoming from the correlation analyses. At all schools except Frazer, single parent status had some effect on both actions and

attitudes. To be more precise, single parents at Keith were more likely than other parents to know how to contact the school board[a] or be member of other community groups[c]. In addition, at Munro, single parents were more likely to recall having been contacted by the board, know how to contact it, have made a placing request or be a member of another community group (all [a]). Less significant Phi Cramer level relationships also existed with a number of other attitudes and actions at these schools. Though less significant, these trends were mirrored at Ross and Cameron, suggesting that single parents are more aware of issues and means of communicating with the school than other parents, regardless of background or position of the school in the hierarchy. These findings refute the traditional stereotype of single parents as being somehow less aware or interested in a whole range of societal issues.

It was particularly interesting to note the high levels of awareness and activity amongst single parents at Munro[7]. Based on the responses, the school had a low percentage of single parents compared to the others; yet those parents had higher levels of awareness about the issues covered than other respondents. Such a pattern points to the complexity of the interrelated variables at play in each area, determined by a range of factors including the drive and ability of head teachers and board members and the socio-economic and demographic background of the catchment.

To conclude, whilst family size was of negligible importance in shaping attitudes and actions, single parents as a whole appeared more likely to act and have higher levels of awareness than the norm. This was particularly salient at Munro and Keith, suggesting that single parent interest was not necessarily affected by the position of the school in the hierarchy.

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[7] Whilst acknowledging difficulties in the validity of any assertions resulting from the small sub sample size.

Occupational/Income-Related Factors

Variations also existed in the backgrounds of the categories of "main earner" between the study schools. Both Munro and Cameron had significant proportions of professional households (c.35%) compared to the other schools. This fell to 8.8% at Ross, with both schools from the lower part of the hierarchy falling below 4%. As expected, patterns of unemployment reflected the same trend, with over 43% unemployed respondents from Frazer, Keith and Ross (compared to the city of Glasgow average of c.18%[8]). This fell to around 15% at Munro and Cameron. Whilst these unemployment figures are around 10% higher than those identified for roughly the same areas in the 1991 Census, the relative patterns across the study schools is approximately right. The high figures might be partially explained by a high number of housewives[9] completing the questionnaires and stating their "occupation" rather than that of the main earner.

Table 8.5 - Occupational Background of Respondents

Background	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Professional	41.7%	42.0%	12.3%	2.8%	4.8%
Unemployed	14.1%	17.0%	43.9%	43.1%	46.4%

In all study schools, responses indicated that parents from professional households were more likely to be aware of key issues, have a specific opinion or have taken some form of action (either contact with the head teacher/board or the making of a placing request) than other respondents. These relationships are outlined in Table 8.7

[8] see Appendix 4.2 (Glasgow City Council, 1998a)
[9] Including families where the main earner was identified to be a student or a housewife - note the potentially higher level of students in the Ross catchment (proximate to Glasgow University).

below. Analysis of frequency counts alone pointed to some form of action or opinion being more prevalent amongst parents at schools further up the hierarchy (also those with larger proportions of professional parents). Levels of placing requests, board/head teacher contact, knowledge of how to contact the board and/or parents who sit on it, were all higher in schools at the top of the hierarchy. It is interesting to note that Ross (from the middle category in the hierarchy) had levels of awareness and action which were lower than those at the schools from the bottom category. Moreover, at Frazer, knowledge of parents on the board was unexpectedly high. This may be partially explained by higher levels of community group activity in more deprived communities (and the higher proportion of respondents from these catchments who had some form of community group involvement).

Table 8.6 - Respondent Contact with the School

"Yes" Answers	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Placing Requests	29.5%	50.0%	12.3%	15.3%	7.1%
Board Contact	10.1%	6.3%	3.5%	4.2%	4.8%
Head Contact	13.4%	15.2%	5.3%	9.7%	9.5%
How to Contact?	57.7%	54.5%	31.6%	34.7%	35.7%
Know Parents?	19.5%	19.6%	10.5%	6.9%	21.4%

The size of the sub samples precluded use of Chi Square tests in much of analysis[10]. However, Table 8.7 details relevant correlations at the Phi/Cramer level in support of these assertions. Chi Square correlations are marked either [a] or [b] depending on the level of significance.

[10] except where indicated in the Table itself

Table 8.7 - Correlations Between "Occupation of Main Earner" and Other Variables

Variable	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Making a placing request	√	√[a]			√
Contact with the board	√[a]	√[a]			
Contact with the head		√	√		
Knowledge of:					
- parents on the board	√	√	√	√	
- what the board does	√[a]		√[b]		
Opinion about:					
- their say on schools policy	√		√		
- the school budget	√		√		√
- the curriculum	√	√	√		√
- discipline	√	√	√		√
- availability of choice			√	√[a]	√[b]
- which teachers to employ			√		
- faith in school staff			√		
- whether the school listens			√		
- adequacy of the board	√[a]	√			

The general trends support both the "hunches" of head teachers and board members (and the assertions in the literature[5]) that more affluent[6] parents are more aware of how to access service "goods", and thus more able and likely to act to exploit opportunities and influence decision-making. The particular relationship between those making placing requests and family background is discussed later in the chapter.

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[4] except where indicated in the Table itself

[5] in the CERI Report (1994), CCES Report (1992), Gewirtz *et al* (1995) and Ranson (1995) referred to in Chapter 3

[6] in terms of position in the occupational hierarchy (Hamnett, 1996)

At this stage, it is interesting to note that 50% of respondents from Munro (and almost 30% from Cameron) had made placing requests. Whilst this initially seems to query any assertions about socio-economic background which might be drawn from Census analysis alone (i.e. a substantial proportion of questionnaire respondents may not actually live in the more affluent Munro catchment), consideration of the "occupations of main earner" section emphasise the links outlined in the literature and the statements of head teachers and board members between affluence and ability to make choices.

The nature of action taken by parents is of further interest. Whilst a significant proportion have contacted the board and/or head teacher and/or made a placing request, there was no correlation between the occupation of the main earner and community group, political party membership or likelihood to have voted. To this end, participation appears to be more "consumer-oriented" amongst better-off parents; manifesting itself in individual action rather than group involvement. This trend mirrors the assertions of Gewirtz *et al* (1995) and Ranson (1995) regarding the ability of certain groups to exploit the market more effectively than others, emphasising concerns about the potential growth of individualism and factionalism.

Despite the lack of apparent interest in more collective forms of participation, it is concluded that occupational and income related factors are significant in determining levels of awareness and related access to Educational goods and channels of influence/power. The concentration of more affluent parents at schools further up the hierarchy thus produces an element of self-perpetuation of the growing socio-spatial inequalities within the city. Operation of market principles will accentuate these inequalities in the absence of some form of effective regulation and redistribution.

Other forms of Participation

Whilst variations were apparent in the numbers of parents participating in other community groups, no particular trends seemed to relate to the position of the school in the notional hierarchy. For example, Frazer displayed by far the highest level of activity[13] (with 24% of respondents participating in other community groups) compared to Keith with the lowest (at 7%). The other schools all sat at around the 11% mark. The high score at Frazer perhaps reflects the plethora of community initiatives and inter-agency groups in operation in the area, and the particular status of the area as a *Priority Partnership Area* at the time of the survey. Whilst Keith displays many similar socio-economic characteristics, relative levels of participation in community groups have been much lower. The absence of a large number of community initiatives may go some way towards explaining the low level of involvement. The more recent redesignation of the Frazer and Keith catchments as regeneration alliance areas may produce a convergence in these figures in time. The current findings could be further exacerbated by the large proportion of the population from backgrounds which the findings to date suggest are typically less likely to express themselves through active participation. However, the relatively high percentage of respondents holding membership of a political party suggests that the latter explanation is less significant. It is interesting to note that political party membership was significantly lower in catchments of the study schools from the top category of the hierarchy. This could partly be explained in terms of the ability or likelihood of the more politically active parents from the lower end of the hierarchy to return questionnaires compared to other parents in these catchments.

[13] Relative figures should be given more credence than individual volumes)

Table 8.8 - Respondent Participation outwith the School

"Yes" Answers	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Community Grp	12.1%	11.6%	10.5%	6.9%	23.8%
Political Party	2.7%	2.7%	5.3%	5.6%	4.8%
Tend to Vote	87.2%	87.5%	78.9%	86.1%	85.7%

Parents at all study schools who were members of community groups were often more likely to have an opinion about issues in the school, know board members or have taken some form of action than other parents. Whilst the strength of some of these correlations was fairly weak, some trends were apparent. These are highlighted in Table 8.9. The findings in part reflect the assertion by school board members in some areas that they themselves tend to become involved in other local issues and forums, pointing to the development of the types of "dominant local interest" referred to by Macbeth (1990) in Chapter 3 (Dearlove, 1973; Newton, 1976).

Whilst some such links were apparent across all the study schools, two particular relationships may be worth noting. Firstly, at Munro, community group members were more likely to have made a placing request than other parents[a]; once again emphasising the tendency for parents who participate through one channel to be more likely to be involved in other areas than the norm. Secondly, community group members at Cameron were happier to leave decisions to staff than other parents[b], indicating a level of trust developed as a result of greater awareness of key political and managerial issues. Of equal interest is the absence of correlation between community group membership and other profiling variables (such as likelihood to vote or membership of a political party). Only single parent status correlated with community

group membership (likely as a result of the tendency of such individuals to be involved in particular groups related to their single parent status).

Table 8.9 - Correlations Between "Community Group Membership" and Other Variables

Variable	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Making a placing request		✓[a]			
Contact with the board	✓[a]		✓	✓	✓
Contact with the head			✓		
Knowledge of:					
- parents on the board					✓[a]
- how to contact board	✓[b]				
Opinion about:					
- their say on schools policy			✓		
- the school budget		✓	✓		
- the curriculum		✓		✓	
- discipline					✓[a]
- availability of choice	✓[b]		✓		
- which teachers to employ			✓		
- faith in school staff	✓[b]		✓		
- whether the school listens	✓[b]		✓		

As mentioned in the introductory comments, a suspiciously high percentage of respondents from each school (upwards of 85% in four of the cases) indicated that they voted in local elections. This relates partly to the possibility that individuals who are interested enough to vote in local authority elections are also more likely than average to take time to complete such a questionnaire. However, the figures are still

unexpectedly high, pointing to the importance of considering relative trends rather than absolute volumes. Regardless of their absolute validity, the figures indicate an element of local interest in the provision of local government services. In light of the fact that actual turnout in most wards seldom exceeds 50%, considerable scepticism remains about the accuracy of this element of the profiling information.

In conclusion, parents who participate in one form of activity tend to be more likely to have higher levels of awareness and are more likely to have acted than the norm. This is not linked solely to socio-economic status, although professional parents in all study school catchments were more likely to have participated in one form or another (as individual consumers of service). The concentration of such parents at schools further up the hierarchy has been referred to earlier. Participation in community groups and political parties cuts across this general trend, with greater proportionate levels[14] of response from such members at schools further down the hierarchy.

Communication and Contact with School Boards

The small size of school boards meant that a negligible proportion of respondents from each school were actually board members. As outlined in Table 7.1, the maximum number of parent members allowed on any of the study school boards was 6. Once considering that not all of these parents would have children in the 1st or 4th Years, it quickly becomes apparent why these figures are negligible. Similar comments applied to the low level of PTA membership. However, some variation

[14] It is acknowledged that membership may not be higher in catchments further down the hierarchy, but that people who are members may be more likely to have responded to the questionnaire than the norm for the catchment.

existed in the extent to which respondents had considered standing for school board membership. Whilst interest is likely to have been exaggerated, some trends are apparent. Munro had the highest percentage at 19.6%, both Frazer and Cameron had around 15%, Ross had 8.8% and Keith 4.2%. These inter-school trends are not unexpected. The high proportion at both Munro and Cameron may be explained by the relatively high levels of general awareness and interest of parents in schools from the top tier of the hierarchy. This was seen earlier to be a factor making participation more likely. Similarly, parents from Frazer were more likely to be politically active, enhancing both their likelihood of becoming involved in some from of representative body and their perception of importance of the role of such bodies. Indeed, parents at Frazer may be expected to have shown higher levels of interest than those at Munro and Cameron based on the proportion of respondents who were community group members. The lower proportions elsewhere perhaps reflect the more limited political activity or interest (highlighted in the profiling section).

Of particular interest was the limited number of respondents who had contacted the school boards. Whilst a slight variation existed between schools, typically in excess of 90% of respondents had never contacted the board. The vast majority of those who had made contact, indicated that they had done so on only one or two occasions. Such trends likely reflect the tendency of parents on the majority of occasions to take up particular issues relating to their own child(ren) with staff at the school or the PTA rather than through the board. Parents from study schools from the top category of the hierarchy were more likely to have contacted the head teacher than elsewhere (15% at Munro; 13% at Cameron). This fell to around 10% at both Ross and Frazer and 5% at Keith. The findings reinforce assertions made earlier regarding other patterns of participation/involvement, strengthening arguments (highlighted in the literature and by

the earlier fieldwork) pointing to higher levels of participation in schools further up the hierarchy.

Table 8.10 - Respondent Contact with the Board

"Yes" Answers	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Considered Board	14.8%	19.6%	8.8%	4.2%	14.3%
Board Contact	10.1%	6.3%	3.5%	4.2%	4.8%
Heard from Board	33.6%	33.0%	15.8%	9.7%	12.6%
How to Contact?	57.7%	54.5%	31.6%	34.7%	35.7%
Know Parents?	19.5%	19.6%	10.5%	6.9%	21.4%

Contact with staff rather than the board was not unexpected. It was further emphasised when parents were prompted as to their perceptions of who the key players were in the local Education arena. Respondents ranked the order in which they would contact a list of individuals in the event of general dissatisfaction with an issues in the school. The responses were collated on a school by school basis, highlighting a fair degree of consistency whilst still allowing inter-school comparison. Respondents from all study schools indicated that the head teacher would be the first point of contact. At all schools except Keith, the school board was the second point of contact. The situation at Keith was particularly interesting as the board was the fourth point of contact (after the head teacher, Director of Education and local Elected Member). The response suggests that the relationship between the board and parents who chose to respond[15] was particularly poor. However, the limitations of the survey method throw little light on the reasons behind this or whether the response was a result of the inadequacy of the board, a poor relationship with the parent body or the strength of the

[15] It is worth considering that a proportion of those parents who chose to respond may have done so as an opportunity to raise concerns about the adequacy of the board and its operation.

local Elected Member. The element of factionalisation in the local political arena may be a further consideration. Other than this anomaly, the next point of contact was the Director of Education, followed by the local Elected Member. This suggests a greater faith in direct managerial contact than via the locally elected representative, lending weight to the chosen path of accountability through the head teacher adopted by the Regional Council, concentrating on managerial processes rather than direct democratic or participative enhancements.

Despite the preferred route of contact through the head teacher, general low levels of interaction between boards and parents reflects the concerns of head teachers and the comments of board members regarding board/parent contact. At Ross and Cameron this appeared to be tied to community group membership, suggesting that either these individuals were more likely to involve themselves in other forms of participation or that they new more about the board and how to make contact. Such trends were not apparent at the other study schools. Perhaps not unexpectedly, those parents who had contacted the board were more likely to have contacted the head teacher; perhaps in response to a single issue or as a result of their general tendency to use channels of communication available to them.

The schools from the top category of the hierarchy displayed the highest level of contact (Cameron in particular having around double the average), mirroring the greater tendency of parents from such catchments to participate in some form. The trend may also reflect increased awareness of the role of the board and/or faith in its ability to act. Certainly, the higher level of contact further up the hierarchy was reflected in the greater level of knowledge as to how to make contact (around 55% at Munro and Cameron compared to around 35% at all the other study schools). This was mirrored in the greater level of personal knowledge of board members at these schools -

around 20% at Munro and Cameron, compared to around 10% at Ross and Keith. Frazer provided an anomaly to this trend, again indicative of the higher level of participation and political involvement in the catchment outlined above. At Keith and Ross levels of knowledge of how to contact the board were again higher amongst community group members (both [c]). This was mirrored at Cameron[a], where length of residence[b] and occupation of the main earner[a] were also significant factors. Interestingly, there also appeared to be a link between knowledge of how to contact the board at Cameron and having made a placing request[b]. Whether this is coincidental or not is open to question, but it again gives credence to the theory that one attitude or action is often supported by another. These findings appear to contradict the earlier assertion that parental awareness levels about the board are fairly limited. However, subsequent findings (discussed shortly) appear to indicate that whilst many parents appear to know how to contact the board, very few are aware of its role or operation.

At all schools except Munro, the occupation of the main earner was a factor in personal knowledge of parents on the board (see Table 8.7); more affluent parents again being more likely to have higher levels of knowledge. Having made a placing request was a further related factor at Keith[c], Munro[a] and Cameron[a], emphasising the links between attitude and action among some parents. Only at Cameron was length of residence a factor[b]. The links between head teacher contact and knowledge of board members were re-emphasised at Munro and Cameron.

The pro-active position of the board in contacting parents not surprisingly followed similar trends. About 67% of respondents from Munro and Cameron indicated that they had never been contacted by the board, increasing to 77.4% at Frazer and around 90% at Keith and Ross. In short, a clear pattern emerged in the study schools whereby boards from the top category of the hierarchy seemed to make

and received more contact with parents than the other boards (or at least are more able to recall such contact). This ties into the aforementioned links with the occupations of main earners. The higher proportion of these in catchments of schools from the top of the hierarchy appears to manifest itself in greater levels of awareness and contact in these areas. At the other end of the spectrum, the Frazer board demonstrated higher levels of contact than that of either Ross or Keith, reflecting higher levels of community involvement and other forms of participation in that catchment.

In conclusion, communications between the boards and the parent body as a whole left something to be desired at each of the study schools. Against this general backdrop, communication appeared better at the schools further up the hierarchy. Even in these instances, the majority of parents appeared more likely to contact the head teacher - likely about an issue affecting their own child(ren) - than they were the board. It appears that more informed parents at each school are better placed to access channels of influence than the norm. The concentration of professional and typically better informed parents in schools further up the hierarchy once again becomes apparent.

Knowledge of the Role and Operation of the Board

Perceptions of the role of the board provided some interesting findings via responses to the statement that "I don't really know what the board does". If the figures for those who agreed that they didn't know are added to these who answered "don't know", a significant majority of respondents from each school were poorly informed as to the role of the board. The trend again reflected position in the hierarchy. Approximately 55% of respondents from Munro and Cameron admitted having limited

knowledge. This increased to 79% at Ross, 72% at Frazer and an incredible 90% at Keith. As outlined in Chapters 6 and 7, the general level of lack of knowledge is a major concern if school boards are pursued as the sole route for parent involvement in Education management (especially if powers are to be enhanced). Perhaps it should not be expected that any individual not sitting on the board would "really know" how it operated. However, both the trend and volume of responses are worth noting in the broader analysis and provide further evidence of the poor communication between boards and parents implied earlier in this chapter and deduced from the head teacher and board member feedback.

Desire to Participate

More specifically, the questionnaire prompted respondents to indicate how they felt about the extent of their say in the following areas relating to the running of the school:

- Council policies on schools;
- the school budget;
- which teachers to employ;
- the curriculum;
- school discipline;
- maintenance of school buildings;
- school meals; and
- school cleanliness.

Table 8.11 - Levels of Opinion about Involvement

a). *No* Opinion on Issues

	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Policies on schools	34.9%	31.3%	31.6%	55.6%	46.4%
School budget	31.5%	30.4%	31.6%	48.6%	42.9%
Teachers to employ	30.2%	29.5%	33.3%	47.2%	40.5%
Curriculum	29.5%	27.7%	30.9%	45.8%	44.0%
Discipline	26.2%	25.9%	35.1%	38.9%	38.1%
Non teaching issues	35.6%	34.8%	31.6%	45.8%	44.0%

b). Would Like *More* Say

	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Policies on schools	15.4%	13.4%	8.8%	9.7%	7.1%
School budget	14.1%	7.1%	12.3%	13.9%	11.9%
Teachers to employ	6.0%	8.0%	7.0%	6.9%	6.0%
Curriculum	13.4%	15.2%	10.5%	5.6%	13.1%
Discipline	19.5%	18.8%	12.3%	27.8%	19.0%
Non teaching issues	13.4%	9.1%	14.6%	7.9%	11.5%

Before turning to specific responses, it is interesting to note from Table 8.11a that variations existed in the level of knowledge (expressed through a "don't know" response) from one school to another. A substantially high proportion of respondents indicated that they "didn't know" how they felt about any of the issues. The levels of "don't knows" were lower further up the hierarchy; resulting in figures pointing to stronger opinions in these schools. Even at these schools, levels of knowledge were far from impressive. At Keith and Frazer, (from the lowest category in the hierarchy) approximately 42% and 47% respectively of respondents tended to answer "don't

know" when prompted[16]. This fell to 35% at Ross and 31% at both Munro and Cameron. These findings mirrored the trend indicated earlier in the questionnaire regarding knowledge of the board, its role and individual board members.

With regard to feelings of exclusion, these generally tended to reflect the position of the school in the hierarchy. Parents from Munro and Cameron expressed the highest levels of frustration at lack of involvement. Ironically, partly as a result of the lower levels of "don't knows", they were also proportionally more likely to indicate satisfaction. Even at these schools, only about 30% felt that their say was inadequate. This was predominantly lower at the other schools, although Frazer respondents also expressed a higher than expected level of exclusion, typically closer to Munro and Cameron than Ross and Keith. Whether this reflects greater awareness and/or expectation amongst Frazer parents[17] is debatable, although responses to other questions again indicate close links between levels of knowledge about the board and perceptions of exclusion (where those most informed typically feel more excluded).

As outlined in Table 8.11b, the expressed desire for greater say failed to meet any of the anticipated trends. Generally speaking, the absolute figures are surprisingly low at all the schools, suggesting that whilst a significant proportion of parents feel distanced from the democratic process, few of those are keen to become more closely involved. Such a trend was suggested by both head teachers and board members in previous chapters. This points to a lack of desire on the part of parents across the study schools for more active participation in decision-making to complement the perceptions of the ineffectiveness of existing channels. Indeed, the latter may be linked to the former. This finding, and the general lack of desire among parent board members

[16] Averaged of responses across all areas covered by this section of the questionnaire.
[17] Reflecting higher levels of community activism

for enhanced powers and responsibilities discussed in the previous chapter points to problems with the implementation of the Government's "Parents as Partners" proposals. Indeed, an article in *The Herald* of 14 August 1998 made specific reference to the opposition of school board parent members to any increase in responsibility.

In Council policies relating to the operation of schools, between 25-35% of all respondents indicated that they felt they had no say at present. The highest figures of around 35% came from Munro and Cameron (from the top of the hierarchy). At a surprisingly high 31%, Frazer provided the now expected anomaly to the anticipated trend, once again perhaps reflecting the higher than average levels of political awareness and participation.

As outlined in Table 8.7, the occupation of the main earner appeared to influence parents opinion about their say in Council policies on schools at Ross and Cameron. In both cases, parents from professional backgrounds were more likely to feel disenfranchised than others. The correlations themselves were weak[c] and the pattern was not consistent across the study schools. Length of residence was a further significant factor at both Munro and Cameron (both [c]), whilst single parent status appeared related at Ross[c]. Whilst no significant inter-school trend seemed apparent, professional parents and single parents (at least at Ross and Munro) appeared more likely to have a specific attitude than the norm (as indicated earlier).

Of particular interest was the higher level of response to the lack of involvement in school budget decisions (ranging 28-40%) than had been forthcoming in response to the other prompts. Once again, trends reflected position in the hierarchy, with the highest levels of exclusion expressed at Munro and Cameron. Certainly, the higher level of perceived exclusion from this area across all study schools could be explained by the more tangible nature and effect of budgetary decisions in each school, or the

general sensitivity and high profile of spending decisions as an issue. However, parents can become more directly involved in budgetary decisions through the board than they can in Council policy decisions made by Elected Members. Whether this reflects a lack of faith in the boards as an influencing factor is open to question, with overall levels of awareness and understanding of the roles and powers of boards being a more likely explanation. Regardless, it is worth noting the higher levels of perceived exclusion from the decision-making process on an issue where many decisions *are* taken in the local area[18]. It is perhaps also worth noting that the highest level of exclusion was voiced at Keith, although this may largely be explained by concerns expressed by the head teacher and board members about the fabric of the building at that school.

A number of different factors were important in affecting parents' opinions regarding involvement in the budget (although there was little consistency in these between study schools). Closer analysis suggests that some of these correlations may be purely coincidental. For example, the occupation of the main earner appeared significant at Frazer, whereas the tendency to have made a placing request was important at Keith (all [c]). At Munro, length of residence[b] and community group membership[c] were important, whereas the tendency to have made a placing request and the occupation of the main earner were significant at Cameron[c]. The latter was mirrored at Ross, with single parent status also being important (both[c]). Despite the lack of specific trends, it is again apparent that in many cases parents who act in one form (placing requests or community group membership) or have certain socio-economic characteristics (higher earners or single parents) are more likely to have opinions on key issues. This supports the views of head teachers and board members.

[18]This presumes that parental concerns relate to the use of the local budget, rather than the overall level as set by the Regional Council.

A similarly high level of perceived exclusion (33-42%) was expressed regarding involvement in decisions on which teachers to employ. Again, this high level related to an area where decisions *are* taken locally, although this was a fairly recent policy development at the time of the sample. However, the obvious extent to which the quality and attitude of the teachers impinges upon the day to day activity of pupils in the school perhaps explains the high profile of this as an issue and the related feelings of exclusion. Despite this, only between 6-8% of respondents indicated that they would like more say. Whilst variations are small, the correlation trends mirrored those relating to say in the budget, emphasising the point made earlier about the overlap of attitudes and actions. Contact with the head teacher was a further significant factor at Frazer[b], hinting that an element of the contact was related to dissatisfaction with a teacher-related issue.

The level of perceived exclusion from decisions on the curriculum was fairly consistent across the study schools (whilst remaining fairly high at between 30-32%). However, Munro and Cameron respondents expressed a higher level of desire to become involved in this area (15% and 13% respectively) than the those from the other schools (with the now anticipated exception of Frazer at 13%). One possible explanation could be that this reflects the greater desire for a broader range of options at schools with a relatively high level of academic attainment. However, there was no direct evidence to support this hypothesis. Regarding correlations, similar factors seemed important as those linked to say in the budget and which teachers to employ (mostly [c]).

School discipline provided an interesting anomaly to the general trends apparent to date. Whilst the level of perceived exclusion remained fairly consistent with other factors (between 28-34%), no particular trend was apparent between schools.

However, the desire for greater involvement in decisions regarding discipline was much higher (typically around 20%), but rising to 28% at Keith (perhaps in response to particular disciplinary problems at that school). Ross provided the exception at around 12%; still a substantial figure in comparison to the desire for say in the other areas raised. At Munro[b] and Keith[c], responses pointed to single parent being a significant factor increasing parents desire to have a greater say. However, the small sub sample size once again made it difficult to draw any firm conclusions.

Parents were also prompted for perceptions of their level of say in services provided within the school which were not directly related to teaching. Building maintenance, school catering and school cleaning were typically undertaken under contractual arrangements (as a result of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT)). In each area services were provided by the Regional Council's in-house direct service organisation (DSO). Expressions of exclusion appeared fairly consistent between schools in each area (typically around the 30% level), with no particular trends apparently relating to the hierarchy. However, the general level of exclusion was much the same as that typically expressed for all other areas arguably more closely related to the quality of Educational experience within the school.

To conclude, low levels of awareness seemed common to all schools across the range of issues raised. These were particularly high at schools in the bottom category, pointing once more to a link between socio-economic status and levels of awareness. Whilst there was little in the way of an inter-category trend in perceived levels of exclusion, parents from schools further up the hierarchy were much more likely to have an opinion than the norm. It appears likely that this is linked to their improved knowledge of how the local Education system operates and their greater tendency to have taken some form of definitive action.

Placing Requests

The making of placing requests at each of the study schools was seen to be a further important expression of parental opinion. 50% of respondents from Munro indicated that they had made placing requests. This fell to 30% at Cameron, still indicating a substantially significant number of inward placing requests. Indeed, this figure would likely have been higher had the number of inward placing requests not been curtailed by over-capacity in the school[19]. These substantial volumes support the statements made by Gambetta (1987) (in his "structuralist" explanation), the head teachers and board members in earlier chapters regarding the tendency for pupils to move upwards through the hierarchy, almost as a form of "social climbing". The popularity of the "better" schools and incremental growth in the upward movement of pupils is manifested in a large number of inward placing requests to these schools. This is supported by the findings at both Munro[a] and Cameron[a], where occupation of the main earner was a significant variable affecting the likelihood to have made a placing request. Interestingly, single parent status was yet again a significant factor at both schools (again both [a]).

Elsewhere, the number of respondents making placing requests fell to 15% at Keith, 12% at Ross and 7% at Frazer. The low level at Frazer is perhaps explained by a combination of factors relating to its low position in the hierarchy, the large geographical spread of the catchment and the strength of magnet secondary schools in areas immediately surrounding it. The generally high level of respondents who had made placing requests is not necessarily indicative of the total number of placing requests made for each school. The figures exceed the actual proportion of placing

[19] As indicated by the head teacher.

requests as a total of each school's role (as indicated in the Regional Council data supplied at the outset of the study). Nonetheless, the inter-school trends indicate disparities in levels of placing requests made in each category of the hierarchy, with the trend being towards movement into magnet schools at the top.

Whilst the responses are notable in their own right, they also prove significant when related to responses to other parts of the questionnaire. In short, do the high levels of participation at Cameron and Munro result from greater awareness amongst more affluent groups, or is it simply that a higher proportion have learned from the particular experience of making of a placing request? Similarly, are the boards at these schools more effective in communicating with parents, or are parents more aware because of their greater likelihood to have participated? It would appear that both are the case; that parents from such schools are more likely (and arguably able) to participate regardless of whether or not they have made a placing request, and that those parents who have made a placing request are more likely to participate in other ways. Such a conclusion would support the inferences of the head teachers and many of the arguments put forward in the literature.

Table 8.12 - Respondents' Perceptions of the Availability of Choice

	Cameron	**Munro**	**Ross**	**Keith**	**Frazer**
Disagree that schools are too similar to offer parents real choice	42.3%	68.9%	21.1%	20.8%	21.4%

This theory is partially supported by the fact that at both Frazer and Keith (from the bottom category of the hierarchy), a higher proportion of respondents from low income brackets appear less likely to perceive that a choice exists between available

Educational experiences, indicating that lack of knowledge may be a significant restricting factor. As highlighted above, respondents form Munro and Cameron were far less likely to agree that schools were too similar (even accounting for the relative lack of knowledge elsewhere). This is likely to in some way reflect a greater awareness of the overall picture of Educational experience within the city. This would support the views of Baron (1981), Macbeth (1989) and the Audit Commission (1996) outlined in Chapter 3. It may also be that aspirational or cost factors come more into play for such low income groups than for other parents as a determinant of whether or not to make a placing request.

Across the study schools, the respondents' perceptions of the reasons behind placing requests coincided largely with those of both the head teachers and school board members (fitting the criteria summarised by David *et al* (1994)). In short, the school ethos, discipline and levels of attainment were all held as being fairly important factors. One issue which was given particular emphasis by parents at all schools was the importance of "distance from home" as a factor influencing decisions. Whilst the limitations of the survey method prevented expansion on this point, a simple explanation could be that respondents felt that the particular decision they had made regarding their placing request (i.e. the school they had selected), was positively influenced by its proximity to their home. From a negative perspective, the response could be seen to reflect the lack of alternative options or choices available to parents. The findings point to choice being curtailed by the lack of alternative schools within easy (and affordable) reach; a point raised by 7 out of 20 head teachers in Chapter 6. Indeed, as more schools are "rationalised" the number of options available to parents falls, suggesting that the concept of continuous improvement in Educational output through competition may be inherently flawed. It is likely that an end point will

eventually be reached whereby there will exist a concentration of all pupils in a limited number of schools, with distance between these precluding sufficient movement to nurture further competition.

In conclusion, the number of inward placing requests increased as one moved up through the hierarchy[20]. This was linked to parental perception of the pull and push factors associated with each school (discussed at length in previous chapters). Not only were professional parents better placed to make placing requests, but the process of choosing proves to be an educational experience, raising levels of awareness and providing further opportunities to access service goods and influence decisions. Initial advantage is thus perpetuated.

Faith in the Judgement of School Staff and the Adequacy of Board Representation

Approximately 70% of respondents from all the study schools were generally happy to leave decisions about Education to the professionals, reflecting the stated views of both head teachers and board members. What was interesting was the variation in responses from the remaining 30% at each school. Whilst around 20% of parents from Munro and Cameron questioned this stance, a similar proportion from the other schools answered "don't know". This appears to support the earlier comments regarding the existence of higher levels of awareness at schools further up the hierarchy.

Based on consideration of correlations, various factors were important in determining this perception. At Frazer, length of residence[b] or previous contact with the head teacher[a] appeared significant factors in building up support for professionals.

[20] This was a key criteria in the "design" of the notional hierarchy; it is thus a piece of contextual information rather than a finding.

At Munro, in addition to those who had contacted the head teacher[a], parents who had made a placing request[b] were generally happier to leave decisions to the professionals; once a placing request decision had been made, parents at least perceived that there were stronger reasons to put their faith in staff. Whether or not this reflects the particular quality of staff at Munro compared to its surrounding schools is debatable, but it does raise an interesting psychological link between the extent to which subsequent attitudes support previous actions.

Table 8.13 - Respondent Perceptions of the School

"Yes" Answers	Cameron	Munro	Ross	Keith	Frazer
Happy to leave decisions to professionals	66.6%	72.2%	67.1%	70.7%	70.5%
The school keeps parents fully informed	77.9%	91.9%	70.2%	77.7%	65.5%
The school listens to parents and responds to their concerns	67.1%	73.2%	64.9%	58.4%	59.5%
The board adequately expresses parents' views	49.7%	41.1%	43.9%	33.4%	40.4%

Of equal interest was the more commonly held perception amongst community group members at Cameron[b] and Ross[c] that they were less happy to leave decisions to professionals - arguably due to either greater awareness of the issues or stronger political tendencies amongst such individuals at each school. This trend was not reflected elsewhere.

Bearing in mind the earlier suggestion that communication between the board and parents was poor, a surprisingly large proportion of respondents indicated that they felt the school kept parents fully informed. In excess of 75% of respondents from all

study schools were satisfied that they were kept fully informed; increasing to a remarkable 92% at Munro. These findings appear to counter initial conclusions drawn in Chapters 6 and 7 about the inadequacy of board contact and communication with parents. However, it is worth noting that much of the *school* contact with parents comes directly from the head teacher (often via the pupils) rather than from the board. Certainly, the distinction between the "school" and the "board" may be an important one, with communication on key issues by the head teacher being more effective than the channels operated by the board. This perhaps supplements the earlier comments on the effectiveness of managerial decentralisation as opposed to democratic enhancements. However, it may also reflect the interest of parents in more tangible day to day issues affecting their child(ren) as communicated through the head teacher, as opposed to more indirect and general issues discussed by the boards. In short, head teacher contact may outline definitive new action, whilst school board contact may simply summarise discussions at meetings or highlight topics being addressed. No particular trends relating to position in the hierarchy were apparent - unlike those forthcoming on consideration of communication with the board.

Links with position in the hierarchy were apparent with regard to agreement that the school listened to parents and responded to their concerns. Munro and Cameron recorded the highest levels of agreement at 73% and 66% respectively. This fell to 64% at Ross, and around 59% at both Frazer and Keith. Whether the trend itself is important is debatable, bearing in mind the limited variation between volumes of response. It is nonetheless worth noting both that a trend did exist - mirroring similar trends throughout the questionnaire responses - and that a significant volume of respondents from all schools concurred with the statement. Whilst this in itself is encouraging, it does raise questions about exactly how the school "listens to parents" in

light of the limited communication between parents and the board as their representative body. It may reflect a level of satisfaction amongst respondents of their direct dealings with the teaching staff and head teacher rather than with the board. Indeed, at Frazer, Keith and Munro, parents who had contacted the head teacher were more likely to indicate that they felt the school listened to parents and responded to their concerns. Whilst this would question the effectiveness of the board as the voice of parents in the school as intended by the Scottish Office, it does suggest to some degree that parent involvement may be largely facilitated through contact with staff. This again appears to vindicate the apparently less than democratic route adopted by the Regional Council in placing emphasis on its managerially oriented decentralisation initiatives.

On the adequacy of school board representation, there was a generally high level of support despite the substantive doubts about boards' roles and responsibilities. Figures indicated that around 40% of parents at each school felt the board adequately expressed parents' views. Cameron was higher at c.50%, whilst Keith was slightly lower at c.33%. The Cameron figure may be explained in terms of the recent high profile campaign run by the board regarding effective utilisation of the school building. The Keith figure is reflected in a higher level of "don't knows", rather than opposition to the prompt. Interestingly, a higher than average proportion of respondents (16-20%) from Munro[c] and Cameron[a] expressed dissatisfaction with board operation (although this could reflect the higher percentage of "don't knows" elsewhere). Indeed, at both schools there was an inverse correlation between occupation of the main earner and levels of satisfaction, better-off parents being less likely to feel satisfied than others. The better than average communication between board and parents highlighted earlier at these schools is perhaps more likely to generate polarised opinion than in areas where

communication is poorer and awareness lower as a result. One way or another, opinion has been generated at these schools.

Inter-Category Trends

Analysis of the findings at each of the study schools provided a number of interesting findings, pointing to the existence of both inter and intra-school variations in patterns of attitude and action. In many cases, the inter school variations were linked closely to the position of the school in the hierarchy outlined in Chapter 5. The intra-school variations related to patterns of attitude/action that appeared to be influenced by many of the profiling variables highlighted in the questionnaire (e.g. occupation of main earner, community group membership, etc.). On top of these patterns, a degree of consistency was apparent in many of the intra-school relationships across all or many of the study schools. The patterns provided a great deal of valid information linked to the overall social geography of the city. This topic forms the basis of Chapter 10.

As discussed in the body of the chapter, a number of distinct inter-category trends became apparent from analysis of the responses from the study schools. On most occasions, these lend weight to the assertions of head teachers and school board members and the inferences drawn from consideration of relevant background literature.

There appeared to be little link between length of residence and the socio-economic background of the school catchment areas. Only in fairly "unique" areas around Glasgow University did any particular trend become apparent. These seemed related to the high proportion of private rented properties and a relatively transient population profile. In short, no inter-category trends were apparent.

Whilst family size was of negligible importance in shaping attitudes and actions, single parents as a whole appeared more likely to act and have higher levels of awareness than the norm. This was particularly salient at Munro and Keith, suggesting that single parent interest was not necessarily affected by the position of the school in the hierarchy. Nonetheless, the tendency for a higher proportion of single parent respondents to be located in schools further down the hierarchy countered the predominant trend of greater levels of action and awareness in more affluent areas.

Despite the lack of apparent interest in more collective forms of participation, occupational and income related factors appear to be significant in determining levels of awareness and related access to Educational goods and channels of influence/power. Schools from the top category typically displayed higher levels of awareness and action as a result. The concentration of professional parents at schools further up the hierarchy thus produces an element of self-perpetuation of the growing socio-spatial inequalities within the city between professionals and those at (or off) the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. In short, there is potential for the gap in access to goods and influence between the categories to widen over time. Operation of market principles will accentuate these inequalities in the absence of some form of effective regulation and redistribution. Linked to this, it was found that parents who participate in one form of activity tend to be more likely to have higher levels of awareness and are more likely to have acted than the norm. This is not linked solely to socio-economic status, although professional parents in all study school catchments were more likely to have participated in one form or another (as individual consumers of service). The concentration of such parents at schools further up the hierarchy again resulted in noticeable inter-category trends. Interestingly, participation in community groups and political parties cuts across this general trend, with greater proportionate levels of

response from such members at schools further down the hierarchy. Indeed, such participation appeared to be higher in more deprived areas than in those catchments falling into the middle category of the school hierarchy.

Communications between the boards and the parent body as a whole left something to be desired at each of the study schools. However, against this general backdrop, communication appeared better at the schools at the top of the hierarchy. Even in these instances, the majority of parents appeared more likely to contact the head teacher - likely about an issue affecting their own child(ren) - than they were the board. It appears that more informed parents at each school are better placed to access channels of influence than the norm. The concentration of professional and typically better informed parents in schools further up the hierarchy once again becomes apparent.

Low levels of parental awareness were common to all schools across the range of issues raised in the study. These were particularly high at schools in the bottom category, pointing once more to a link between socio-economic status and levels of awareness. Whilst there was little in the way of an inter-category trend in perceived levels of exclusion, parents from schools at the top of the hierarchy were much more likely to have an opinion than the norm. It appears likely that this is linked to their improved knowledge of how the local Education system operates and their greater tendency to have taken some form of definitive action.

With regard to parental choice, the number of inward placing requests increased as one moved up through the hierarchy. Placing requests were based on parental perception of the pull and push factors associated with each school (discussed at length in previous chapters). Not only were professional parents better placed to make placing requests, but the process of choosing proves to be an educational experience, raising

levels of awareness and providing further opportunities to access service goods and influence decisions. Such patterns seem to reflect those predicted by head teachers and board members (mirroring those identified in the literature), whereby more aware parents at each school appear to be more likely to take opportunities available to them. Professional parents were also more likely to feel that schools offered a choice of Educational experiences - perhaps largely reflecting the perceived success of their own particular decision. The reasons for making such requests also mirror those outlined by head teachers and board members, with "proximity" appearing to be a particularly significant factor quoted by parents. This is important when considering the possibility of an inherent contradiction in the Government's thinking with regard to placing requests. In short, the limited space in magnet schools and the increasing cost of school transport if unpopular schools are "rationalised" will eventually produce a situation where virtually no choice is available to parents in certain areas and the market is unable to force improvement through competition. This may be one of the flaws in the "free choice" proposals being floated by Glasgow City Council (discussed in more detail in Chapters 10 and 11).

As regards board operation, parents at schools in the top category were typically less satisfied with board operation than the norm. This appeared to be associated largely with greater levels of awareness. A more informed position allowed parents to develop firmer opinions, giving the impression of heightened dissatisfaction. It should thus not be presumed from the findings that boards in the top category functioned less effectively than elsewhere. Interestingly, parents at the same schools were typically more satisfied with the way the *school* as a whole listens and communicates.

It is worth pointing to a distinction between the school in the middle category and the other study schools. Reliance on the findings from one school might naturally be expected to buck the general trend. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that on many occasions the findings from Ross were distinct from those of the schools in the top category of the hierarchy. Less distinction was apparent from the schools in the bottom category as regards many of the findings. In some occasions, levels of awareness and action were actually lower in the Ross catchment than in the more deprived areas in the bottom category. Whilst such "blips" may be random, it is worth considering that the higher levels of public sector activity in more deprived areas may actually raise levels of awareness and action above those in the "average" catchment.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the final part of the fieldwork jigsaw, considering the views of parents as to the range of issues discussed in Chapters 3 to 7 and their perceptions of the roles and effectiveness of head teachers and school boards. It has demonstrated that the attitudes, actions and ability of parents to access service goods and power vary depending on their apparent "motivation" and overall levels of awareness. These appear to be linked to socio-economic status, with professional parents in each catchment more likely to express opinions and take some form of action than the rest of the parent body. In addition, this likelihood increased with movement up through the notional hierarchy of schools (largely as a result of the increasing concentration of professional parents). Community group membership and single parent status also appeared to be important, with such individuals having higher levels of awareness and a greater tendency to act than the norm.

A number of inter-category disparities in levels of awareness and tendency to act were apparent, with parents from schools in the top category more likely to participate in a consumer oriented manner than those at the bottom. Conversely, parents from the bottom category appeared more likely to participate in some form of collective action (although the fact that such parents were perhaps more likely to respond to the questionnaire than others from schools lower down the hierarchy may reduce the actual extent of this trend). In short, parents who participate in some form do appear likely to participate in other ways. However, expressions of consumer and active citizen behaviour did not appear to strongly overlap.

Significant problems appear to exist in the effectiveness of the various means of parental involvement in school management. Parents' knowledge of the various channels of communication open to them appeared fairly limited in all the study schools, although they appeared to increase with movement up through the hierarchy. Whilst board contact with parents appeared minimal, responses pointed to a broad degree of satisfaction with the extent to which the school as a whole kept parents informed. This would point to either adequate information coming predominantly from the head teacher or an element of "ignorance is bliss" amongst parents. Parents' understanding of the role of the school board also seemed to be minimal across the study schools, although again levels of awareness were greater amongst professional parents and community group members. The ambiguity, lack of knowledge and poor communications have serious implications for board accountability to parents or head teacher accountability to local communities through boards. In addition, such a picture points to a general failure of central or local government policy in Education to empower parents in any collective manner which might be associated with the development of active citizenship. This is of particular concern in the face of the

"Parents as Partners" proposal to transfer powers from head teachers to boards. In the short term, some means must be found of preventing elitism in detached governing bodies until greater public interest in more collective forms of participation can be nurtured.

The extent to which change has been "demanded" by parents across or within catchments is also open to question. Undoubtedly parents would argue that they wish the highest quality of Educational experience for their child(ren). Moreover, many parents have certainly expressed this desire through the making of inward placing requests to schools further up the school hierarchy. However, outwith that context there appears to be a degree of general apathy or acceptance amongst parents about their representation via the school board, the range of Educational options available to them and their trust in the ability of the professionals within the school. Some would argue that this reflects the success of the Regional Council initiatives, the boards and the schools themselves in providing parents with an acceptable range and quality of service. Certainly, there was a high degree of satisfaction expressed by respondents regarding the extent to which the school listened to parents and responded to their concerns. This was mirrored in generally high levels of trust in the ability of professionals across the study schools.

However, examination of the levels of knowledge and awareness of the operation of boards and contact with them at all the study schools suggests some difficulties do exist regarding collective parent representation. This arguably supports the route chosen by the Regional Council in progressing its Education management proposals, whereby managerial accountability has been increased via a range of mechanisms as an alternative to enhancements in democratic or participative processes. Such processes arguably tap into the trust placed in professionals at each school by

parents. Interestingly, parents were more likely to contact the head teacher than the board regarding a matter of concern at the school (especially at Ross where they appeared likely to contact the Director of Education prior to the school board). Furthermore, beyond the individual school level, the indication that parents were more likely to contact the Director of Education than their local Elected Member, suggests some awareness of service responsibilities and points to perceptions of a more direct route to information and decision-making than through the use of existing local democratic or participative channels.

However, regardless of the apparent adequacy of managerial accountability to the centre, there appears little evidence of enhanced participative democracy or the growth of active citizenship inherent to any development of community governance (Stewart and Stoker, 1989; Stewart, 1995). This in itself fragments the downward chain of fiscal and managerial accountability to the parent communities which each school serves. These must be medium to long term concerns for any elected body requiring an informed civil society mandate to maintain and strengthen its relative position *vis-à-vis* central government. Whether or not the "Parents as Partners" proposals alleviate these concerns remains to be seen.

Informed by the responses from each element of the field work, Chapter 9 now goes on to integrate the conclusions drawn from each element of the fieldwork. It considers the results of the fieldwork findings in light of the background literature, drawing conclusions against each of the socio-political and Education management research questions outlined in Figure 1.2.

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Chapter 9 - Socio-Political Conclusions

Consideration of the literature and subsequent fieldwork has aimed to identify the main drivers of change in public service provision and its implications for the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. It is suggested that these changes have impinged to differing degrees on each locale, thus altering the overall socio-political geography of the city. The emphasis of the New Right agenda in the 1980s and early 1990s on individual consumerism as opposed to active citizenship is considered to pose a threat to community cohesion, with broader fiscal constraints undermining area-based strategies of positive discrimination. Such trends have combined with other shifts in central/local government relations to constrain the redistributive role of local government, threatening its ability to effectively address inter-locale inequalities. At this stage, the literature on central/local government relations and Education management has pointed to the New Right agenda of consecutive Conservative Governments as the primary factor driving change, with subsequent post-Fordist patterns of service consumption reflecting increased choice and encouraging competition and strengthened accountability. Moreover, initial investigation of the situation in Education management in the former Strathclyde Region points to managerial decentralisation and growing consumerism (expressed through parental choice) having taken place without the anticipated enhancement in democratic accountability or more extensive citizen participation.

Figure 9.1 - Socio-Political and Education Management Research Questions

- What are the main factors driving change in public service production and consumption? Which appear to be the primary factors?
- Has post-Fordist production and consumption actually occurred? Is there sufficient choice to generate market pressures?
- What are the key factors determining consumption? How has it manifested itself locally?
- Is there an apparent relationship between mobility and participation?
- Do individual consumers expressing choice typically become involved in other forms of active participation?
- Has democratic *and* managerial accountability been enhanced? Is the customer *and* citizen agenda being addressed?
- Where and how have the main shifts in power taken place?
- Who are the key players in the local arena? How do they facilitate/gatekeep change?
- Does the relationship between local education authorities, schools and communities mirror the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society?
- Is the redistributive role of local government being undermined by decentralisation of control in Education?
- What do the findings imply about the applicability of the theories of local government discussed in Chapter 2?

This chapter considers the findings from each stage in the field work in light of these initial conclusions drawn from the literature. It examines how the different views of head teachers, parent board members and parents support or challenge the broader theories of change in Education management and public service provision as a whole. Final conclusions on each of the socio-political and Education management research questions being examined in the study are drawn as a result. These are highlighted again in Figure 9.1. The implications of these on the socio-political geography of the city are discussed in Chapter 10.

Primary Factors Driving Change

The literature and the feedback from head teachers, board members and parents pointed to two main factors driving change in the production and consumption of public services. Firstly, the New Right ideology of consecutive Conservative Governments during the 1980s and early 1990s[1] imposed an agenda of competition, choice and strengthened accountability on local authorities (Stoker, 1991; Walsh, 1995; and Isaac-Henry, 1997). This manifested itself in Education management in the development of parental choice, budgetary devolution, school boards/governing bodies and grant maintained status (Bondi, 1988; Hoggett, 1992; Walsh, 1995; and Johnes, 1995). Each of these required a particular response by LEAs in the manner by which services are produced. Moreover, these changes went hand in hand with more general constraints on local authority budgets, reduced autonomy/discretion and an ever increasing emphasis on the private sector as a means of delivering cost-effective public

[1] Much of which continues to find favour with the incoming Labour Government.

services (Gyford and James, 1983; Midwinter, 1984; and Bailey, 1988). Secondly, increased civil society awareness and expectations of reduced bureaucracy, greater accountability[2] and improved service quality produced an element of demand-led pressure for changes in the organisation, operation and openness of local authorities (Corrigan, 1997; Gyford, 1991; Walsh, 1995; and Barns and Williams, 1997). These again required a local authority response. The nature of this response was determined by the attitudes, abilities and actions of key players (elected and appointed) in each authority, partially shaped by their perceptions of the role of local government in general (and their authority in particular) *vis-à-vis* central government and national/local civil society (Stoker and Mossberger, 1995; Ranson, 1995). Furthermore, the requirement for streamlined administrative efficiency made enhancements in fiscal and managerial accountability attractive in their own right (Walsh, 1989; Stoker, 1996b; and Isaac-Henry, 1997).

Analysis of the field work and literature points to the imposed New Right agenda being the primary factor driving changes in production, with changing civil society consumption patterns being in part facilitated by the subsequent local authority responses (Stoker, 1989; Jessop, 1992b). Little evidence from the head teacher interviews countered the initial conclusion that the imposition of a New Right agenda emphasising competition, choice and strengthened accountability appears to have been the primary factor driving change. The local authority response manifested itself in the range of initiatives and processes introduced at a school level. These also reflected a local managerialist agenda of reducing central costs and bureaucracy, increasing managerial and fiscal accountability and diverting political attention from the LEA in the run up to Local Government Reorganisation in Scotland in 1996. It would be

[2] Fiscal, managerial and democratic.

naive to suggest that the secondary pressure from civil society referred to above did not shape the central and local agendum.

The perceptions of board members generally provided insufficient direct evidence to support or refute this initial conclusion. However, indirect comments regarding the inadequacy of board/parent relationships and the perceived apathy of the majority of parents suggests that no extensive demand-led pressure was (or is) being applied through the existing service specific mechanisms for participation. Although placing requests have been popular with many parents, general apathy towards more active participation is expressed in the lack of interest in board membership, the exception of board elections (and very low turnout where they are held) and the infrequency of parent contact with the board. Unlike head teachers, parent board members consider the existing mechanisms for involvement and the range of issues in which boards can become involved to be adequate. Moreover, they perceive broad parent satisfaction with the boards direction and operation despite an overall absence of adequate information to inform such a judgement. Both findings point to lack of demand for change being more of a factor than the inadequacy of existing mechanisms for participation. In saying that, it must be considered that the strength of demand for change will be annulled to some extent as a proportion of parents particularly dissatisfied with the public school provision - however small - opt for alternative private sector schooling.

Feedback from parents emphasises this point, with opportunities for consumption through parental choice being widely exploited in each of the study schools. Parents also perceive that some form of market exists, with awareness of how it operates being higher amongst professional and more motivated parents. More widespread expressions of active citizenship have been less salient, with either school

boards appearing to be inadequate mechanisms for facilitating change or civil society itself choosing not to express itself directly through service specific channels[3]. This manifests itself in a lack of interest in board membership, a drop in both the number of boards and the number of elections held for those that are left and an apparent apathy amongst parents to press for more information or involvement as a collective body. The extent to which parents and school boards can be held accountable to the broader parent body in each locale is thus limited. This is of particular concern in the short term in light of the Labour Government's "Parents as Partners" proposals to transfer additional powers from LEAs to school boards.

To conclude, the imposed New Right agenda appears to have been the primary factor driving changes in the production of public Education. Whilst growing civil society dissatisfaction with traditional methods of service production has to a large degree facilitated the imposition of this agenda on local authorities (Walsh, 1989), it seems that this has been a secondary factor influencing change. Undoubtedly, subsequent consumption patterns have altered as a result of increased choice, producing an element of competition between schools in the state sector. Moreover, increased fiscal and managerial accountability have been developed in a response to the general demands of central government and civil society, and in an attempt to improve administrative efficiency in the face of continued resource constraints. Indeed, these "general[4]" demands appear to be more significant factors pressing for change than those forthcoming through service specific channels. This points to similar pressures being applied across public services, rather than solely in Education.

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[3] An element of less direct pressure is also exerted on the local authority as a whole through public feedback (via complaints and opinion surveys), media coverage, external scrutiny (from the Scottish Office and the Accounts Commission) and low voter turnout.

[4] Expressing themselves in the broad New Right agenda and civil society pressure through the media, low voting turnout, user and business disinterest and negative opinion poll feedback.

Post-Fordist Production/Consumption and the Market

Both head teachers and school board parent members pointed to a perceived pseudo-market operating within the local authority sector, offering parents a degree of choice in Educational experiences through placing requests. Head teacher responses indicate that they perceived that a sufficient range of Educational experiences exist within the city to offer parents adequate choice. Board members typically concurred. However, doubt could be cast on this assertion due to the total absence of GMS within the city (and, indeed, its virtual absence across Scotland). Head teacher perception must thus be based on examination of private alternatives to state Education and (more likely) the perceived existence of a range (if not hierarchy) of distinct Educational experiences in the city's comprehensive secondaries. Whilst parent and practitioner perceptions of "good" and "bad" schools appears to partly affect placing request patterns across the city, the criteria used to make these subjective assessments (attainment, discipline, school ethos, etc.) do not appear to have stemmed predominantly from distinct variations in service production. Rather, they are often symptomatic of the underlying socio-economic make-up of the school catchment. It is questionable whether or not devolution of control over some elements of their operation to individual schools could be termed a shift in production.

Feedback from parents pointed to similar perceptions, especially amongst those professional groups within each catchment. The extent of this perception increased with movement up through the hierarchy. The perceived existence of a market supports the arguments of Hardman and Levacic (1997), Ranson (1995) and Barns and Williams (1997), but counters those of the CERI Report (1994) and Woods *et al* (1995). This may be predominantly related to the definition of a "market". Whilst

undoubtedly finite and apparently restricted, a *pseudo*-market does appear to exist, manifesting itself unevenly in the number and pattern of placing requests across the city. As a result, it can be concluded that post-Fordist patterns of consumption have occurred within the city *following* the imposition of the New Right agenda.

This does not in itself point to the existence of post-Fordist patterns of service *production.* In the absence of significant supply-side deregulation in the form of alternative "sources" of provision (such as GMS in England and Wales), it could be argued that only limited post-Fordist production has taken place. This initially appears to support the arguments of Cloke and Goodwin (1992) and Painter (1991), who questioned the applicability of the term in a local government context. However, the devolution of budgetary and staffing decisions to each school has increased the potential for a range of Educational experiences to develop within the local authority sector. Whether or not this could be categorised as a shift in production is questionable[5]. It is concluded that whilst post-Fordist production patterns are not overtly apparent in Education within the city, a form of "flawed post-Fordist" production (as hypothesised by Jessop, 1992a) may increasingly manifest itself as devolution of control to local schools "beds down".

Initial consideration suggests that similar conclusions could be drawn across the services which continue to be procured by the local authority. Only where a form of externalisation has taken place, or where the authority works in partnership or competition with a range of other providers in the local arena, could more overt patterns of post-Fordist production have been developed.

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[5] Moreover, the extent to which these developments produce the differing levels of attainment, discipline and ethos which encourage choice could be further debated (these appear more related to historical patterns and socio-economic factors, although the attitude, ability and action of the head teacher and board members may also be significant).

Key Factors Determining Consumption

Consumption patterns in public Education manifest themselves predominantly in the expression of parental choice of school. However, it is important to consider that parental pressure on the head teacher and board at individual schools may directly or indirectly impinge upon some of the factors perceived to be of importance to parents wishing to make a choice. All elements of the field work pointed to the same factors being important in determining choice:

- parent perceptions of attainment, discipline, ethos and facilities;
- proximity and territoriality;
- awareness of choice; and
- "ability" to choose.

These reflect the points abstracted from the literature by David *et al* (1994) in Chapter 3.

Barns and Williams (1997) and the CERI Report (1994) point to the increase in parent awareness of Education as a route to economic success for their child(ren). This appears to be reflected in the factors outlined in the first bullet point. Parents were perceived by head teachers and board members to consider that these factors will determine the quality of Educational experience at any establishment. They become the "push" and "pull" factors determining the extent and direction of individual placing requests. Parent feedback emphasises that this perception is generally widespread. In short, these factors are the key criteria in the local Education marketplace.

Proximity, territoriality, awareness of choice and ability to choose all have an influence on the volume and nature of the choices which are subsequently made. All

the fieldwork highlighted that geographical, financial and psychological constraints placed on parents restricted choice (supporting Gambetta's (1987) perception of "structuralist" factors constraining the operation of market forces). The proximity of a suitable alternative to the local[6] school was a key factor. On some occasions, the existence of a magnet school nearby resulted in a large number of outward placing requests. However, in many areas choice was constrained by the absence of such an alternative or the prohibitive transport costs of attending a desirable school further afield. This was particularly the case for lower income families in each catchment. School closure and merger are likely to exacerbate this problem unless transport costs can be covered and traditional allegiances challenged.

Territorial factors were also perceived to be significant by head teachers and board members. This was particularly the case in more deprived areas, where head teachers suggested that territorial allegiances saw some pupils opting to attend denominational schools rather than travel outwith the area. Whilst parents failed to make particular reference to this point, it is likely that concerns over travel arrangements (and costs) and lack of knowledge of alternative areas may partially explain the low level of awareness of alternative choices amongst less well-off parents in some of the more deprived areas.

It is apparent that socio-economic status is a factor affecting patterns of consumption (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Barns and Williams, 1997). Head teacher and board members perception of awareness of choice and ability to choose being lower amongst more affluent groups were borne out by the parent feedback. On each occasion, parents from non-professional groups tended to be less aware of choices and less likely to express them than the majority of other parents. Moreover, this inability

[6] The school to which the child was allocated by the LEA.

increased with movement down through the school hierarchy. Only where parents were members of community groups or single parents did awareness levels appear to be above average. This produced a situation in each locale where the most aware and motivated parents (and often the most able pupils) were perceived to be most likely and able to make outward placing requests to a school further up the hierarchy.

To conclude, perceptions of key success factors in Education (attainment, discipline, ethos and facilities) appear to be the main factors informing consumer decisions. These decisions are restricted by a number of geographical, financial and psychological constraints placed on parents affecting their awareness, motivation and ability to make choices. Socio-economic factors play a key role in determining the extent of these constraints, with lower income parents in all areas less likely to be able to express choices than the rest of the parent body. The tendency for areas with a high proportion of lower income parents to be served by schools with lower attainment levels, poorer discipline and a less "attractive" ethos makes these findings particularly significant. In short, some form of redistribution is essential if inequalities in Educational experience and related socio-economic polarisation are not to be widened by the operation of market forces.

Mobility and Participation

Head teachers and board members pointed to "hunches" that parents with higher levels of physical and socio-economic mobility were more able to participate than others. The feedback from parents points to this being the case. In each catchment, professional parents had greater levels of general awareness of issues

relating to the school and were more likely to have participated[7] in some way (in the school) than others. The levels of awareness and participation increased with movement up through the hierarchy. (The one anomaly was that parents from such groups were less likely to indicate that they were members of political parties than the rest of the parents sampled). This general trend points to a further positive relationship between the "motivation" of parents (a term adopted by a number of head teachers) and their attitudes and actions. In short, more motivated parents may be more interested in becoming aware (or *vice versa*) and may participate as a result. Moreover, parents who participate are more likely to become aware and so on *ad infinitum.* Interestingly, parents who participated in other community groups and single parents tended to have higher levels of awareness than the norm, largely independent of socio-economic status. This produced relatively high levels of awareness and participation at Frazer, from the bottom category in the schools hierarchy.

It is concluded that where awareness levels were high, participation levels are also likely to be above average. In all the study school catchments, it tended to be professional parents who were more likely to participate in the school in a number of ways, pointing to a correlation between participation and social mobility. These findings largely concur with those of Barns and Williams (1997) and Gewirtz *et al* (1995). However, it is significant to note that much of this participation appeared to be consumer oriented (placing requests or individual contact with the head teacher or board) rather than manifesting itself in more collective forms of involvement (board/community group membership or political party affiliation).

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[7] Communicating with board, contacting the head teacher, making a placing request, having an opinion, etc.

Choice and Further Participation

This issue is in part covered above. Individuals who participate in one form do appear more likely to participate in others. Head teachers and board members once again expressed a "hunch" that this was the case. Feedback from parents indicates that the nature of this activity may be separated into consumer oriented participation and citizen oriented participation. This distinction links to the findings of Walsh (1989), Gyford (1991) and Luntley (1989) as discussed in Chapter 2. In short, professional parents in all catchments were more likely to have acted or have an opinion on consumer oriented issues (placing requests, contact with the school or stronger feelings of personal exclusion from key decisions). This points to a greater ability on their part to express concerns and access the available channels of communication open to them. To that end, they are better place to access influence and service goods than the majority of parents. On the other hand, parents from catchments at the lower end of the hierarchy were more likely to participate in community groups and be members of political parties. Such parents also had higher levels of awareness of issues relating to the school and tended to place less faith in the professional judgement of the school staff. The feedback indicates that there is little evidence of a link between the two "groups[8]" of participants .

As a result, it is concluded that awareness of issues and mechanisms allowing participation not surprisingly facilitates greater involvement. Once such awareness has been generated, the opportunity and ability to participate increases. This points to the likelihood that one form of participation will be followed by others. However, there is little evidence from the case study to suggest that those who express consumer

[8] "Consumer-oriented" and "citizen-oriented"

preferences are more likely to participate as active citizens than other parents. (Indeed, the opposite appeared to be the case from the parent feedback in this particular piece of research). It is probable that knowledgeable consumers most capable of accessing Educational goods are also more able and likely to express preferences and exert influence across the whole range of public services. Likewise, those who participate in specific collective forums may be more likely to become involved in others.

Accountability and a Customer/Citizen Focus

Feedback from the head teachers, board members and parents seriously questions the adequacy of boards as vehicles for active parent participation and strengthened democratic accountability. This may undermine the effectiveness of the "Parents as Partners" proposals in the short term. The perceptions of head teachers indicated that the initiatives and processes introduced by the former Regional Council were predominantly aimed at strengthening fiscal and managerial accountability. At the same time, the development of school boards across Scotland was intended to enhance the accountability of each school to the broader parent body. As a result, both managerial and democratic accountability should have been strengthened. However, the literature and the feedback from head teachers indicates that whilst the managerial developments introduced by the Regional Council are perceived to have been relatively successful, the failure of boards to engender broader parent enthusiasm has left something of a democratic deficit in local Education management. Moreover, the number of boards, the tendency to hold elections and the turnout when elections are held have all fallen considerably since board inception in 1988. This has been

exacerbated to a limited degree by the distancing of the Elected Member from the decision-making process as a result of greater devolution of control to individual schools in the first place. As a result, the managerial accountability of head teachers to local populations could be considered to be somewhat fragmented. Unless boards are particularly active, the chain of accountability would appear to link upwards to the centre, rather than outwards to the community. Board members comments reinforced this assertion.

At first glance it appears that this trend justifies the managerially oriented route taken by the Regional Council in its decentralisation focus. There appears to be broad support from the board member and parental feedback for the specifics of this managerialist solution, expressed directly by respondents via a faith in the professionalism of staff in the school to respond and adapt to parental concerns. At the same time, the lack of contact with the board and understanding of its role appears to vindicate the focus of Regional Council attention on the head teacher rather than the parent representative body. However, the absence of effective mechanisms for parental involvement undermines any top down managerial accountability of the head teacher. In short, whilst the head teacher is more fiscally and managerially accountable to the LEA than before, there is still no effective chain of accountability to the local parent community.

It is difficult to judge the actual effectiveness of boards as channels for involvement in light of the apparent apathy of the parental body at large. However, these factors cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive. Whether or not apathy results from the limited powers of the boards in Scotland (as against the boards of governors in England) is open to question. Whilst it is possible that the enhanced "Parents as Partners" powers would increase parental interest, the prudence of progressing down

that route in light of the current attitudes is debatable. Such a move may facilitate the type of domination by local interests referred to by Macbeth (1992), Dearlove (1973) and Newton (1976) in Chapter 3. This is especially relevant as board members and parents have indicated little desire for an increased say in school decision-making. The extent to which this lack of appetite ties into the attitudes, abilities and actions of current board members seems limited, with the levels of interest/awareness, motivation and attitudes of parents appearing to be greater determinants of the success or failure of boards as representative bodies. Regardless, it can be concluded that the increased managerial accountability of head teachers under the former Regional Council's decentralisation processes has not yet been matched by the type of democratic accountability envisaged by the Scottish Office (1989a and 1989b) under school boards. The absence of communication and any strong democratic mandate not only undermines board accountability, but also weakens head teacher accountability to the parent body (intended to be maintained through liaison with the board).

As a result, the extent to which the consumer *and* citizen agenda have been addressed is highly debatable. Whilst parents have exploited the parental choice legislation, there has been no great demonstration of (or apparent demand for) increased citizen participation in Education decision-making. This appears to be symptomatic of the general absence of a desire for proactive collective action on the part of local communities. Whilst defensive action in the face of a perceived threat to services or institutions has been commonplace (Stoker, 1989; Walsh, 1995; and Gyford, 1991), seldom has there been widespread interest in active participation in the process of governance which has manifest itself in a form other than political or interest group representation. Whilst it could be argued that this reflects the absence of effective mechanisms for participation, it would also seem to tie in closely with the fragmentation

of collective action inherent in the growth of individual consumerism. In short, the neo-liberal agenda of the New Right has encouraged service by service improvement in response to individual consumer demand (Hambleton *et al*, 1989; Gyford, 1991). As a result, civil society demand for public services expresses itself in a fragmented and individualistic manner (Corrigan, 1997). It appears to be only indirectly at a non-service specific level that civil society presses for change in the means of governance in any collective way[9]. The current existence of a broad "citizen agenda" therefore seems open to question.

Main Shifts in Power

Analysis of the literature pointed to the incremental loss of LEA autonomy since the mid 1970s (Midwinter, 1984; Stoker, 1989; Walsh, 1989). This resulted from the centralisation of power (into the hands of central government) and decentralisation of control (stemming form increased managerial and political decentralisation). Such trends resulted not only from particular policy in Education, but also from the broader New Right agenda aimed at restricting public expenditure and increasing regulation by the centre. Civil society demands for improved services and reduced bureaucracy were further push factors.

As has been discussed, local authority responses to these competing pressures resulted in the devolution of control from the LEA to individual schools in an attempt to strengthen fiscal and managerial accountability. School boards were intended to provide the necessary democratic check on head teacher power. However, failure to generate sufficient parent interest in boards and the related inadequacy of

[9] through the media, opinion poll feedback, reactive opposition to perceived threats

communications with the broader parent body has severely restricted the extent to which this has occurred. The falling regularity of school board elections and reductions in the number of boards have exacerbated the flaw in the overall principle.

The result has been the lack of broad collective empowerment of parents as stakeholders in the Education service. Parent board members have been empowered to some degree, but this has reduced broader parental influence by concentrating power in the hands of a small number of parents (Deem *et al*, 1995). Ironically, the "Parents as Partners" proposals could increase this unless they are matched by some form of more general active parent involvement. To date, the existence of the board itself has appeased calls for more effective action aimed at increasing parental involvement (Bogdanowicz, 1994).

Undoubtedly, consumers have been empowered through the introduction of parental choice. The fieldwork and the literature suggest that those most likely and able to access choice and Educational goods are also best placed to exert influence on the local decision-making process (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Barns and Williams, 1997). This results in a perpetuation of socio-spatial divisions, as over-reliance on the market increasingly favours individual and elitist interests. The ability of the LEA to re-allocate Educational goods between locales is also threatened as outward placing requests from schools in more deprived areas undermine their future viability in a shrinking resource environment. The extent to which the overall redistributive capacity of the local authority (undermined by budgetary constraint and increased regulation) can counter this trend through area based positive discrimination is discussed later in the chapter.

At this time, it is concluded that the main shifts of power as a result of the New Right policy in Education and increased demands of civil society are apparent in three

trends. Firstly, the centralisation of power, increased regulation and growing fiscal burden on local authorities has reduced their discretion in managing the local Education system (Midwinter, 1984; Stoker, 1989; Isaac-Henry, 1997). Secondly, head teachers have been empowered (at the expense of the LEA) by the process of managerial decentralisation aimed at reducing central bureaucracy and increasing service accountability (Deem *et al*, 1995). The failure of school boards to act as adequate mechanisms for broad parental involvement has so far prevented this power being shared with the parent communities at the sub-local authority level (Clegg 1989; Lukes, 1986; Bogdanowicz, 1994). Finally, individual service consumers have been empowered by the parental choice legislation, providing opportunities for individualistic exploitation of available Education goods and access to influence in the local decision-making process (Gewirtz *et al*, 1995; Barns and Williams, 1997). Perhaps as intended by advocates of the New Right agenda, no real local collective empowerment has thus resulted from the changes in service management prior to the "Parents as Partners" proposals.

Key Local Players and their Role in Change

The head teacher in each school is most likely to be the key local player in driving and shaping change. Chapter 6 indicated that as a result of the nature of the processes implemented by the former Regional Council (and the prescribed role as laid out in the job description), the head teacher not only plays the primary role of overseeing the strategic, operational and financial management of the school, but also sits in a pivotal position in the line of managerial accountability between the LEA and

each local community. This is strengthened by the perceived inadequacy of the boards in many locales as parent representatives in the school or school representatives in the community. "Parents as Partners" may change this.

Whilst the school board chairperson (or particular factions within the board) may also fulfil an important role as a supporter or gatekeeper, the position of the head teacher "between" the LEA and the broader parent community currently stresses his/her ability to affect the nature and pace of developments within each school. The innovators/compliers/ laggards typology devised by Stoker and Mossberger (1992) could be applied in a similar form[10] to head teachers, with variations in the extent to which individual head teachers drive change within their schools. Some appear more ready than others to pilot innovative solutions (educational and managerial) to particular issues within the school. The majority appear to adopt and accept these solutions in due course. A minority take a more entrenched traditionalist approach to the role of the head teacher, appearing to reluctantly take on new roles and responsibilities and often expressing concerns about the implications of change for them and the "quality of teaching and learning" in the school. Whilst not directly related to the position of the school in the hierarchy (or pseudo-market), the head teacher's attitude, ability and actions may imprint themselves to some degree on each school in a manner affecting the image of the school in the eyes of consumers. This attitude, ability and action appears to be more a feature of the individual head teacher's personality than related to the relative "performance" of the school. Similarly, the attitudes, abilities and actions of board members also seemed unrelated to position in the hierarchy .

[10] the terminology and "spirit" of the typology remain the same, although the definitions of "innovator/complier and laggard" alter to those implied in the body of the text.

Whilst the current inadequacy of boards suggests that members roles will be secondary to that of the head teacher in the majority of cases (Brehony, 1994; Brigley, 1994; Deem *et al*, 1995), the board still plays an important part in the relationship between the school and the broader parent body. Within each board, the chairperson acts as a key player. Although factionalisation may occur, the position of the chairperson gives these individuals substantive contact with the head teacher and the LEA on school and board related issues. In addition to the "power" of the chair in any formal session, the chairperson is also in a position to determine the agenda for board meetings. In short, whilst board members are disproportionately able to access the school decision-making and management process (compared to most parents), the chairperson is in a particularly strong position (Clegg, 1989; Deem *et al*, 1995). This is to the benefit of the school (and parents and pupils) when the chairperson can work with the head teacher to inform and drive the change process.

The weakness of the chain of accountability to the parent community may actually strengthen the position of board members in their dealings with the head teacher. To that end, board members in general and the chairperson in particular have the potential to become strong players in the local Education arena. "Parents as Partners" will enhance this. On many occasions this potential appears to be restricted by the tendency of boards to play a predominantly supportive role in their dealings with school staff and a general lack of desire to become involved in the more strategic issues affecting the school (unless of course such change appears to be of threat to the future of the school or the continued quality of educational experience). The lack of frequent and formal communication/contact with parents also suggests that boards are currently unlikely to fulfil a gatekeeper role to any significant extent. However, it may be that the very existence of boards is seen to appease broader parental desires to

participate (Bogdanowicz, 1994). Board member feedback points to perceptions on their part of adequate parent representation through the boards. This opinion was not broadly shared by either head teachers or parents. This perception could result in each board exerting more influence on the school than even an extended mandate might justify.

The LEA, School, Community Relationship

The tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society has changed significantly since the late 1970s, with the relative position of local government declining during that period (Stoker, 1989; Midwinter, 1984; Isaac-Henry, 1997). The LEA/school/community relationship has altered as part of this broader dynamism. In short, the role of the local authority has been undermined by an imposed central agenda largely facilitated by civil society disquiet about the quality of services and bureaucratic nature of many authorities. Changes in the LEA/school/ community relationship have also seen the role of the LEA decline as control is devolved to a school level. However, the relationships between the LEA and schools have generally remained co-operative and reinforcing (reflected in the absence of substantial opting out and the supportive comments of head teachers). Head teacher perceptions indicated broad sympathy with the direction and progress of the LEA in implementing change. Board member responses tended to concur with this opinion, with support for the head teacher in developing the predominantly amicable working relationship which appeared to exist between the school and the LEA. This appears to be in definite contrast to the heated relationship between central and local

government during the study period. This may in part be due to the absence of national party political considerations in the LEA/school relationship.

Concern about the adequate operation of boards and the general apathy of the broader parent body in demanding change were re-emphasised in the parent feedback. As outlined earlier, whilst this may mirror a similar picture across local government services, general parent disinterest and the absence of any democratic mandate for many boards (despite their statutory nature) points to particular concerns in public Education. Not surprisingly, communities on the whole appear to have shown more sympathy towards the plight of their own schools than they have towards the LEA, although often no clear distinction appears to be made between the two. There has been little active community involvement in the decision-making process within schools, mirroring the general absence of collective citizen participation in the local government decision-making process. Outwith specific complaints, parent dissatisfaction appears to manifest itself in a non-service specific manner. It thus appears that local civil society does not seem to be directly influencing the shape of specific service provision in the same may it indirectly presses for broader change in governance. Moreover, it appears less interested in positive participation than perhaps would have been anticipated from the expressed levels of dissatisfaction with the operation of local and central government.

To conclude, whilst a dynamic relationship exists between LEA, schools and communities it appears more amicable than the broader tri-partite relationship, with quite different interaction between LEAs and schools than between central and local government. The attitudes of communities to LEAs and schools do not appear to be clearly distinguishable, differing quite considerably from the varying civil society perceptions of central and local government.

Decentralisation and the Threat to the LEA

The literature points extensively to the emasculation of local government by the direct and indirect agenda of consecutive Conservative Governments since 1979 (Stoker, 1991; Midwinter, 1984; Monies, 1995; Bondi, 1988; and Johnes, 1995). The former Regional Council seems to have tried to respond in such a manner as to minimise the negative implications of change. All the feedback from the fieldwork lended credence to suggestions that the LEA had responded effectively to reduce internal centralisation and bureaucracy. There also appeared to be broadly held support amongst head teachers and boards for the LEA, demonstrated in a reluctance to opt out, support for school staff and central support services and a continued desire for an overall comprehensive Education system across the city. Whilst there was little direct evidence from any stage of the field work to indicate that the redistributive role of the LEA had been undermined, there was a significant element of support amongst head teachers and board members for the principle of positive discrimination enshrined in the former Regional Council's Social Strategy. However, whilst they also stated a desire for equal access for all to Educational goods, some did raise concerns about the negative effects of incoming placing requests on their own schools. This appears to indicate less support in practice for certain elements of redistribution.

The former Regional Council appears to have been careful in the design of its DMR scheme to ensure that the funding formulae continued to reflect its Social Strategy objectives. In conjunction with a shared Council ethos with head teachers, this countered the potential loss of strategic capacity inherent in budgetary devolution. Expressed opposition to the "Parents as Partners" proposals centre on this threat, with fragmentation paving the way for moves towards GM status. Such steps would appear

to facilitate the removal of Educational planning and resourcing from LEA control to a Scottish Parliament. This appears to pose a particular threat to any future local government sponsored arrangements to redistribute or positively discriminate through Education channels. The discussions in Chapter 11 point to this not necessarily being the case. The overall strategic capacity of the local authority (in the area) to redistribute has already been undermined by disaggregation at Local Government Reorganisation, ongoing resource constraints, revenue budget capping and the ringfencing of particular cost centres. Moreover, changing residential patterns and ongoing placing requests appear to have threatened the future viability of some schools. Indeed, the Glasgow Unitary Authority announced an extensive rationalisation programme in October 1997 (Herald, 14 October 1997, p.1) proposing to close between eight to ten secondary schools as part of a "vision of school equality". The strategy also includes proposals to lever in extensive private sector investment to remaining schools in some deprived areas to create subject specific centres of excellence throughout the city. Further consideration will be given to the proposals and their socio-spatial implications in the next chapter.

To conclude, whilst it appears that the changes in Education management themselves have not yet significantly undermined the role and redistributive capacity of the LEA (largely as a result of the sensitivity of the LEA response), disaggregation of the Region-wide service at Local Government Reorganisation and a range of ongoing fiscal constraints have undermined local autonomy and discretion, threatening the ability of the new unitary authority in the area to maintain the same level of strategic capacity apparent in the former Regional area during the 1980s and early 1990s. However, whilst the potential removal of the service to the Scottish Parliament may at first seem to reduce the ability of local authorities to adequately redistribute

through Education inputs/processes alone, the development of effective inter-service partnership arrangements would seem to offer a number of solutions for more integrated area based approaches to tackling disadvantage. Such partnerships would bring together the various skills, experience and resources of the different public, private and voluntary services/agencies operating in the area. While this in itself is not new, there has traditionally been difficulty in translating overall partnership goals into co-ordinated, planned and resourced actions on the ground. Inadequate partnership planning has seen, for example, limited mention of individual contributions to partnership goals in resource-based departmental service plans. This makes it virtually impossible to translate broad goals into specific actions and targets for individuals working in the partnership area, limiting the extent to which objectives are addressed in a coherent and co-ordinated manner (Accounts Commission, 1998). The partnership plans become a "wish list", with the benefits of effective inter-agency/service planning and project management seldom being fully realised.

Theories of Local Government

Head teacher, board member and parental support for the principle of parental choice and perceptions as to the existence of a market of schools may point to a small element of support for some tenets of public choice theory espoused by Friedrich von Hayek, Milton Friedman, Sir Keith Joseph and Niskanen (1971). However, the opposition to GMS counters this assertion. Indeed, the feedback from the field work generally heightens concerns about the appropriateness of the theory and unchecked operation of market principles in public Education raised by King (1995), Stoker

(1991), Bowers (1992), Walsh (1995) and Johnson (1997) in Chapter 2 and Woods *et al* (1995), Ranson (1995) and Barns and Williams (1997) in Chapter 3.

As outlined in Chapter 6, head teachers felt that placing requests and further supply-side deregulation (through opting out) undermined any broad ethos of systematic comprehensive schooling (as suggested by Ranson (1995) and Barns and Williams (1997)). Secondly, head teacher opinion further queried the benefits of competition between schools as a means of enhancing the standard of service, with many interviewees considering that schools performance was negatively affected by either a substantial gain or loss of pupils (mirroring the CCES Report (1992) findings). Thirdly, the subsequent closure of schools as a result of placing requests appears not only to threaten the maintenance of links between schools and their catchments, but achieves little more than transfer some of the problems experienced in schools in deprived areas to neighbouring areas. Whether the "watering down" of these links actually proves to aid attainment remains to be seen. Finally (as mentioned earlier), the benefits to the individual consumer of parental choice must be offset against their implications for other pupils (at the losing and receiving schools) and the weakening of broader area-based collective solutions embracing positive discrimination - a clear feature of the former Strathclyde Region's Social Strategy. A form of balance, regulation or redistribution seems essential.

Localist and communitarianist concerns about the weakness of boards as facilitators of parental involvement seem to be emphasised by all of the feedback from the case study. Whilst apparently effective managerial decentralisation may please some localists, adequate citizen participation in Education does not appear to be facilitated by the current arrangements. The reality of an almost total absence of broad parental involvement once again points to a need to promote active citizenship prior to

any form of community governance (as advocated by Stewart and Stoker, 1989; Clarke and Stewart, 1991; and Stewart, 1995) being feasible. As a result, the development of more effective participative processes and citizen ethos would appear fundamental to the progression of a localist or communitarian approach. Regardless, some immediate steps appear essential to address the current shortfalls in democratic and managerial accountability apparent in the existing mechanisms. The "Parents as Partners" proposals *may* be a start, although any threat to the strategic capacity of the LEA is unlikely to find favour with localists.

Nonetheless, the communitarianist approach advocated by Etzioni (1993) and Tam (1995) would appear to have increasing significance. However, despite a civil society reaction to the excesses of the consumerism of the mid to late 1980s (Salmon, 1995), there appears to be little evidence from the fieldwork of a bottom up development of Luntley's (1989) "social citizenship". The absence of parent pressure for collectively oriented participation (or even adequate information) and the diminishing number of boards (however inadequate) suggests that civil society demand for service-specific involvement is limited. Whether or not this is due to apathy or broad satisfaction remains unclear. The challenge for local authorities during the coming years appears to involve the more effective engagement of civil society in shaping the breadth of its activities in a reducing resource environment. Whether or not some of the "citizen development programmes" being introduced at primary school level in a number of LEAs bear fruits in the next millennium remains to be seen. Regardless, such activity will require to be progressed against a backdrop of a more diverse picture of public service provision than is currently the case. Under such circumstances, some form of adequate arrangements will need to be put in place

to allow community input at a local level across a range of public services, regardless of who plans, funds, provides or procures them.

Conclusion

Informed by the responses from parents in each of the study schools, the Chapter has integrated the conclusions drawn from each element of the fieldwork against the socio-political and Education management research questions. The New Right agenda was considered to be the primary factor driving change in Education management, with demand-led pressure from civil society facilitating the imposition of central government policy. Subsequent post-Fordist consumption patterns appeared to generate further momentum for change on the part of local government, although civil society appeared to express itself at a general rather than service specific level. Post-Fordist shifts in production appeared minimal, although the differing contexts and traditions of each school and the devolution of control from the LEA has generated a *pseudo*-market of Educational experiences within the city. In the absence of supply-side diversification, this would appear to manifest itself as *flawed* post-Fordist production.

The operation of the pseudo-market appears to be determined by the perceptions of parents (as to a range of push and pull factors) and the restrictions placed on the ability to choose by geographical, territorial, financial and psychological constraints. These constraints appear to impinge most significantly on "less motivated" and typically lower income groups, manifesting themselves in socio-spatial patterns across the city. These are discussed in Chapter 10.

The extent to which managerial and democratic accountability are strengthened by the developments in Education management is debatable. Certainly, the managerial and fiscal accountability of the head teacher to the LEA and the board appears to have been enhanced by a combination of central and local government processes/initiatives. However, the apparent inadequacies of school boards as facilitators of broader parental involvement (regardless of demand) have failed to strengthen democratic accountability to the same extent. Indeed, this weakness has fragmented the chain of accountability between the head teacher and the broader parent body. This is particularly significant in light of the role of the head teacher as the key driver and gatekeeper of change in the local Education arena. The "Parents as Partners" proposals may resolve this to some extent, but they also present a threat of elitist hijacking of the local Education agenda.

The LEA/school/community relationship exists within the broader tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. However, the interaction between the LEA and schools appeared far more amicable in the majority of instances than that between central and local government. Moreover, parents on the whole failed to make the same distinction between the LEA and the school as they appeared to between the two tiers of government. It was of interest to note that non-consumer related public pressure for change appears to generate itself predominantly through non-service specific channels.

Despite the purported centralisation of power and decentralisation of control, the LEA appeared to have managed to maintain its redistributive capacity as a result of the inclusion of Social Strategy related weightings in its DMR funding formulae, the absence of schools pushing for GMS and a broadly shared public Education ethic with its head teachers. More general constraints on local authority activity would likely have proved to be more significant factors in the medium to long term. Indeed, Local

Government Reorganisation transferred service responsibility to the Glasgow Unitary Authority in 1996 resulting in a loss of strategic capacity and overall tax base. The new council is now facing difficulties in strategic management and budgetary reallocation which the former Regional Council may have had greater capacity to deliver. Any transfer of the service from local government control to a Scottish Parliament will present a number of challenges in terms of local redistribution and citizen input to setting priorities and levels/standards of service. Should a return to paternalism be anticipated? It seems likely that the former could be largely addressed through effective partnership working.

Whilst elements of public choice theory undoubtedly manifest themselves in the existence of a pseudo-market within the city, concerns continue to exist about the appropriateness of competition as a factor driving improvement. Despite assertions in the CERI Report (1994) to the contrary, figures published by the former Regional Council (see Chapter 4) points to improvement in levels of attainment during the 1980s and 1990s. It is difficult to assert that these are a result of improved Educational output resulting from competition. Further concerns relate predominantly for the implications of market operation on schools at the bottom of the hierarchy, the overall comprehensive Education system and cross-service area-based redistributive strategies. Whilst increased decentralisation and the retention of the service by local government may satisfy some exponents of localist theory, the inadequacy of mechanisms established to facilitate participative democracy and the apparent absence of an ethos of active citizenship would appear to preclude the development of a communitarian approach to parental involvement in Education decision-making in the short term (regardless of the "Parents as Partners" proposals). Chapter 10 considers the

implications of this and the other conclusions on each locale and the overall socio-political geography of the city.

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Chapter 10 - Implications for the Socio-Political Geography of the City

Having discussed the socio-political and Education management conclusions drawn from the research in Chapter 9, this Chapter goes on to examine the implications of these conclusions for particular locales and the overall socio-political geography of the city. The discussion is broken down under each of the key research questions initially outlined in Figure 5.4 (these have been restated in Figure 10.1 for ease of reference). The analysis covers the range of issues highlighted in the literature in the opening chapters, drawing those together within the context of the geographical concepts initially outlined in Chapter 5. The discussion is based on abstraction of the research findings to date and the conclusions drawn from initial analysis of the relevant literature.

Implications of the Socio-Political and Education Management Case Study Findings

The literature points out that considerable shifts have occurred in the UK economic structure over the last few years (Stoker, 1989; Gyford, 1991). In addition, changing labour markets and labour relations have been a key element in the purported move to post-Fordism (Stoker, 1991; Jessop, 1992a and b). In response to this, there has been a general increase in the diversity of local populations within cities, with the characteristics of locales varying from place to place. Developments in Education management have also had a significant effect. Chapter 3 highlighted the extent to which closure, merger and parental choice have combined with demographic and

residential change to impinge on particular locales. The implications of these changes for Glasgow were discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Figure 10.1 - Key Research Questions: Locale and Geography of the City

- What are the implications of the socio-political and Education management case study findings for each locale and the overall socio-political geography of the city?
- Do inter-locale disparities in these phenomena exist? Can these be traced to the nature of particular locales? (e.g. is locale a factor in influencing patterns of service consumption?)
- Has consumerism undermined community focus and locale homogeneity? And, if so, to what degree?
- What do the findings imply about the appropriateness of area-based solutions as a means of fulfilling a redistributive role of local government?

cont./

- How are intra-urban local spaces best administered and governed? How does this support each theory of local government?
- Have changes in the tri-partite relationship during the 1980s and early 1990s altered the socio-political geography of the city?

Schools with a large proportion of higher income parents in their designated catchments typically have higher levels of attainment, better discipline and a more positive "ethos" than the norm (MacBeath, 1992). As Hamnett (1996) indicates, traditional patterns of tenure in the UK (e.g. the concentration of lower income

households in spatially defined social housing estates) mean that inter-locale trends can be particularly distinctive within the city. Residence is thus one of the main factors determining access to influence and Educational goods (and related life chances) across the city. The socio-political and Education management changes may have altered this in two contrasting ways. Firstly, parental choice may have reduced the importance of residence as a factor by offering access to Educational goods to those from other locales (perhaps with lower income backgrounds). Secondly, centrally imposed restrictions on the redistributive capacity of the local authority to positively discriminate in favour of more deprived areas may exacerbate existing inter-locale disparities.

Undoubtedly, the survey evidence demonstrates that parental choice has had some effect on patterns of service consumption across the city. Even after weighting the parental responses, it appears that a relatively clear pattern emerges whereby parents from professional households generally are more able and likely to make choices than other parents. They typically have higher levels of awareness, expectation and motivation, increasing their ability to make informed decisions about which school they would like their child(ren) to attend and whether or not they are satisfied with the status quo. In short, they have fewer psychological or financial constraints to grasping available opportunities. As a result, the picture drawn from the fieldwork points to professional parents typically having direct access to a school further up the hierarchy (as they live within the designated catchment area) or being more able to select such a school through parental choice.

Parental choice has thus reaffirmed some elements of the socio-political geography of the city, whilst altering others in a number of ways. Firstly, it has increased opportunities for more motivated parents from traditionally more deprived catchments to access schools further up the hierarchy, reducing the exclusivity of

schools in the more affluent areas of the city as a result[1]. This seems to be symptomatic of a broader trend affecting many western cities following economic restructuring (Sassen, 1991). It is claimed that the decline of manufacturing and the growth of a flexible, post-Fordist and largely service-based economy (Stoker, 1989) is seen to have led to an increased "professionalisation" of the active workforce (Hamnett, 1996; Esping-Anderson, 1993). As outlined in Chapter 1, rather than producing increased social polarisation, it is argued that there has been a growth at the top and middle of the occupational hierarchy at the expense of the bottom (characterised by low income households and the unemployed). As professionalisation increases across cities, "awareness" and associated opportunity are extended to groups traditionally restricted from access to service goods and influence in the former middle-income manufacturing sector. Partially independent of residential patterns, increased professionalisation may thus extend opportunities to traditionally excluded groups.

Secondly, (and partly as a result of professionalisation) parental choice appears to have left a "residue" of typically less able pupils from more deprived households[2] (experiencing lower levels of parent awareness, expectation and motivation) in emptying schools with lower levels of attainment. Such parents appear typically more psychologically constrained from expressing choice, as well as being more likely to be restricted by financial or territorial factors. As a result, such trends appear to be increasing socio-spatial inequalities within the city, with widening gaps between the "haves" at the top and middle of the occupational hierarchy and the "have nots" at (or off) the bottom. Whilst more pupils "in the middle" have access to improved Educational opportunities, there is little indication from the literature that overall levels

[1] In addition, approximately 600 children travel across the city/LEA boundary to attend "good" schools in the more affluent suburbs of Lenzie, Bearsden and Eastwood (Scottish Office, 1998).

[2] Typically concentrated at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy and reliant on income supplements via the welfare state (Hamnett, 1996)

of attainment have increased *as a result of increased choice* (CERI, 1994; Munn, 1990). However, regardless of the cause, enhancements in results were experienced in Strathclyde during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1992b).

Finally, it has reduced the extent to which some schools relate to their local communities, as (typically more able) pupils travel outwith their designated catchment areas to attend schools elsewhere in the city. In other areas, the pupil profile has changed, with more and more pupils being drawn from outwith the designated catchment.

These findings are of particular concern in light of the reduction of the local authority's overall redistributive capacity. As outlined in Chapter 9, the former Regional Council was relatively successful in countering the threat to its Social Strategy objectives in Education. This was achieved predominantly through the sensitive design of its DMR funding formulae to positively discriminate towards the most deprived parts of the city. However, other ongoing factors have posed more significant problems. Local Government Reorganisation in Scotland in 1996 has left the Glasgow Unitary Authority with a much reduced redistributive capacity (largely due to a substantial reduction in its tax base) and bereft of a strategic regional authority willing and able to redistribute in favour of the city. Further fiscal problems have resulted from associated staff rationalisation costs, difficulties over the disposal of assets, ongoing tight budgetary settlements and changes in the taxation of pension funds. These in themselves have reduced the frequency and scale of Social Strategy related projects, threatening the ability of the Unitary Authority to counter the socio-spatial polarisation mentioned above through integrated area-based solutions. This is discussed further later in the Chapter.

Other changes in Education management have had more negligible effects on each locale and the socio-political geography of the city. Changes in service production have increased local managerial discretion as to how resources are used and which teachers have been employed. This has allowed more sensitive decisions to be taken locally, with knock-on benefits to pupils and parents. Whilst this appears to have been a positive move in terms of increasing head teacher accountability and devolving decision-making, the resultant effects on the nature of each locale seem limited. Similarly, the development of school boards has attempted (with limited success) to enhance head teacher accountability and parent involvement. This again seems to have had few significant implications for the nature or level of participation within each locale or across the city, with the chain of head teacher accountability fragmented as a result. Higher levels of awareness in catchments of schools nearer the top of the hierarchy may strengthen accountability of head teachers and boards in those areas to a limited degree. Where participation has occurred, it tends to have been predominantly consumer oriented, with limited development of any collective or communitarianist ethos of active citizenship in any of the case study locales. The "Parents as Partners" proposals may assist in nurturing this in the future.

To conclude, parents in more affluent locales tend to have greater direct access to schools with higher levels of attainment. Additionally, such locales have a higher proportion of professional parents more able to express informed choice as to alternative provision. As deprivation increases, the proportion of parents able and likely to express choice decreases, with financial and territorial factors becoming increasingly important. The ability of more aware and motivated parents (typically from higher income households) to make placing requests subsequently increases socio-spatial

inequalities within the city as residual households at the foot of the occupational hierarchy find themselves unable to grasp opportunities.

Inter-Locale Disparities and Locale as an Influencing Factor

Gyford (1991) and Stoker (1991) suggest that changes associated with macro-level economic restructuring have not manifested themselves uniformly across locales. As outlined earlier, Hamnett (1996) suggests that economic restructuring has widened income inequalities as the proportion of middle income (traditionally skilled-manual) jobs in the manufacturing sector has been replaced by both a growth of professional jobs and an increase in informal labour and unemployment. This professionalisation has produced a new spatial division of labour, social mobility and life chances. Long-standing variations in employment rates, economic development, academic achievement, and political affiliation on a sub-national level further muddy the picture. This has been altered further by the differing responses of the local state to broader social and legislative changes. The nature of each locale is therefore determined by the complex interaction of a number of dynamic and often inter-related variables.

For the purpose of this study, locale has been defined in terms of the designated catchment areas around each school. As highlighted in Chapter 5, the size of these catchments/locales is typically sufficiently large to encapsulate a number of distinct enumeration districts and communities (defined, in some cases, in terms of community council boundaries). Whilst specified criteria[3] have been used to distinguish between generally more or less affluent catchments, the geographical expanse of each results in only a limited degree of socio-economic homogeneity. The research findings

[3] See Chapter 5 (Figure 5.5) on "study school selection criteria"

emphasised this heterogeneity, with intra-catchment disparities in socio-economic status being apparent in the parental responses from each school. To that end, it was difficult to point to distinct *catchment-wide* differences in the patterns in which service consumption and participation manifest themselves across the city. As has been indicated, it was clear that parents further up the occupational hierarchy had greater levels of awareness and were more able and likely to participate than the norm. As a result, locales with higher proportions of professional parents displayed more widespread signs of participation than more deprived locales. Moreover, *within* each locale, professional parents displayed similar tendencies. Awareness appeared to be a key factor, with community group members and single parents also demonstrating higher than normal levels of opinion and action across many locales. In short, the spatial manifestation of more affluent and aware parents across the city appears to generate "pockets of opportunity". These are typically (but not solely) clustered in more affluent locales.

The extent to which locale is a factor in determining patterns of participation is open to question. Duncan (1989) argues that locale has little affect on the workings of political and social processes. Should such an effect exist, he argues that it "would entail the existence of locally specific class and gender relations and forms of political hegemony combining to produce a distinctive local social system or local political culture which would shape the way people act" (in Gyford, 1991, p.20). He cautions against the idea that social systems are causally determined by locale, as would be implied by the idea of wholly autonomous local social systems or political cultures.

Duncan's (1989) conclusion appears a little dogmatic, ignoring the implications of shared life experiences in certain areas as a basis for abstracting an emotional and political response. Certainly, there is no guarantee that this will always manifest itself in

either a tangible or consistent form. Nonetheless, the case study findings suggest that it would be naive to ignore the implications of locale and the allegiances it may generate as one key factor influencing or otherwise linked to the attitudes, abilities and actions of the resident population. It would seem particularly strong where a single issue (such as threatened school closure) is seen as a threat to a distinct community (such as a designated catchment). A defensive response to an externally imposed threat may highlight such local allegiances. This is not to say that locale in itself is a determining factor. However, the interaction of historical and socio-economic circumstances combining to determine the nature of each residential area will produce a set of constraints and opportunities influencing the life chances of the individuals in those areas. These circumstances will structure the nature of the locale to some degree (and *vice versa*), producing a spiral effect whereby lack of opportunity constrains social mobility, thus limiting opportunity and further constraining social mobility. Similarly, where socio-economic circumstance favours opportunity, the increased levels of awareness and experience resulting from action facilitate further opportunity. Indeed, Cooke (1989) points to the ability of specific locales to develop innovative responses to changes within society. He argues that there is a clear division between locales having a history of active, local policy intervention and those lacking such a history. While acknowledging that this will typically be in response to an external threat, the allegiances which relate to particular locales cannot be ignored as factors influencing attitude and action.

Consumerism, Community Focus and Locale Homogeneity

Uncertainties remain over the link between the boundaries of each locale and the existence of a feeling of community within those boundaries. Whilst the concepts of "locale" and "community" remain abstract, a sense of shared agenda, focus or experience might be anticipated within or around a defined area. As discussed earlier, the size of each catchment and typical lack of socio-economic homogeneity question the existence of a distinct catchment-wide community identity (except in the face of a perceived threat to the future of the school). This perception was supported by the majority of head teachers interviewed as part of the fieldwork.

Nevertheless, it would be nonsensical to suggest that there was no shared focus, agenda or experience across more limited but nonetheless defined geographical areas. Inter-catchment placing requests and often associated school closures undoubtedly undermine such a shared experience as pupils travel outwith the locale on a daily basis, often developing new social networks, territorial allegiances and patterns of consumption no longer associated with their own residential neighbourhood. The resultant loss of shared experience and local identity is presumed to have a detrimental effect on any notion of community cohesion. Again, this view was shared broadly by head teachers.

Regardless of spatial patterns of service consumption, the emphasis on individualistic consumerism since the 1970s also has had implications for community cohesion and identity. There exists a paradox between the concepts of individualism and collectivism, with the New Right seeking to exploit the former through its emphasis on consumer choice and competition. More generally, low voter turnout in local elections, the lack of parental interest in school board activity, broad apathy surrounding participation in decision-making and the absence of any apparent

communitarianist ethos of active citizenship, all point to the failure of government or civil society to generate collective interest in shaping priorities and services. This has occurred against a backdrop of growing demands for individual redress when services "fail", the development of "Charterism", extensive private purchasing of publicly-owned housing stock and a substantial level of inter-school placing requests. It has only been where the implications of consumerist excesses have manifested themselves in a threat to individuals (shrinking resources for key public services, environmentally sensitive road construction projects, increased homelessness and rising crime figures) has more collective action been demanded.

Area-Based Solutions and the Redistributive Role of Local Government

As detailed in the opening Chapters, local government plays a number of fundamental roles in addressing issues relating to each locale. These are not mutually exclusive and include policy planning, resource re-allocation and redistribution; community development; community consultation, participation and representation; targeted service delivery; and the provision of local access to services and information.

Cooke (1989) points out that many of the most deprived locales tend to be heavily dependent upon public expenditure. The resultant need for resource re-allocation towards particular locales emphasises the essential role of local government as the agency most able to identify and influence each one's relative and absolute nature. Hutchinson (1993) and Ranson (1995) argue that uneven development justifies the existence of local government, in that it is the only manner by which a broader

system of government can cope with diversity. To that end, the continued design and implementation of redistributive area-based solutions appears justified.

Chapter 4 pointed to the response by the former Regional Council to addressing inter-locale disparities through the details of its Social Strategy. Chapter 4 and the subsequent field work suggested that Strathclyde Region had maintained its objectives in Education through the sensitive design of its DMR funding formulae, ongoing support and the development of a shared ethos with its head teachers. However, Local Government Reorganisation and ongoing fiscal pressures have subsequently threatened Glasgow Unitary Authority's ability to maintain this redistributive role as effectively. At the same time, socio-economic disparities continue to manifest themselves on the ground in a manner requiring some element of redistribution in resource allocation. As a result, an integrated area-based approach continues to offer the most effective solution in terms of establishing clear priorities, responsibilities and related contributions to optimise limited resources. This area-based approach is particularly relevant in light of Scottish Office guidance on Decentralisation (1995) and the Customer/Citizen Focus element of the Best Value Regime (1997). Both point to greater devolution of local authority decision-making to a neighbourhood or area level, with priorities and services designed to reflect the unique and specified requirements of communities in those areas. Whilst discretion remains as to how local authorities deliver these objectives, the proposals nonetheless point to the emphasis being placed on area-based solutions at a national level. This follows a similar focus by previous Conservative Governments towards area based regeneration schemes, but enhances the role and responsibilities of elected local government in designing appropriate solutions. Local government was largely by-passed or marginalised in many of the Conservative Governments' regeneration schemes.

The detrimental implications of placing requests on area-based solutions have been discussed at length earlier in the chapter. However, any redistributive approaches require to be progressed within the context of parental choice, with any move to alter existing parental freedoms likely to be politically unacceptable at a national level. Indeed, the Labour Government has been in favour of the *status quo* in parental choice. Ironically, *realpolitik* may require a move a way from reliance on neighbourhood schools as a solution to alleviating spatially manifested disparities. Falling school rolls and the clamour for service enhancement and budgetary savings appear to make rationalisation essential. As outlined in Chapter 9, Glasgow Unitary Authority has proposed an extensive merger and closure programme as part of an innovative scheme of service enhancement aimed at pushing up service quality and associated attainment levels across the city.

The Glasgow proposals involve ambitious plans for modernising comprehensive schools *and* the delivery of a comprehensive Education service across the city. To achieve this, the Council is proposing to refurbish, rebuild and equip the city's secondary schools with the latest technology and ensure that each school provides a full, relevant and focused curriculum for its pupils. The proposals are expected to cost approximately £70 million, being funded largely from the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Further revenue resources are to be found to provide additional teachers and support the delivery of a modernised curriculum. The resources are to be realised form the Council's capital building programme, the "new deal for schools"[4] and an increase in public/private partnership working.

[4] Additional revenue allocation by the Labour Government to Scottish local authorities ringfenced for spending on Education in 1998/99

According to the Council, "these changes will raise standards and maximise the potential of all pupils. Providing new opportunities for the future citizens of Glasgow are the keys to the prosperity of the city in the 21st Century. These are part of a new strategic and radical plan to modernise comprehensive, secondary Education in the city by widening parental choice, improving quality and increasing standards of achievement. The impact of these changes will not just have far reaching effects in the city but will have a much wider impact, pacing Glasgow at the forefront of excellence in Education and adding to the world-wide reputation of Scottish Education" (Glasgow City Council, 1997b, p.1).

The Council considers that the present provision of Education within the city does not ensure that all pupils maximise their potential as a result of under-resourcing and inflexibility. A reduction in the number of surplus secondary schools places is seen as essential. There are currently 29,000 pupils in the city's 38 secondary schools. The capacity of these schools totals 49,000, producing a surplus of around 40%. The plan is to "concentrate Education's resources on 29 strategically placed, quality non-denominational and Roman Catholic secondary schools" (p.3). Such a programme is seen as taking 4-5 years to implement fully, releasing resources of around £7 million for reinvestment. Closure will be aimed at rationalising delivery to focus and improve the service, rather than solely as a means of cost cutting.

All of the schools will be 6 year comprehensive secondaries based on the core curriculum. In line with the Council's social strategy, the 8 secondary schools serving the city's 7 regeneration alliance areas will be given additional resources to "enhance the core curriculum with a wide range of more relevant courses, often practically based, linked to further education, higher education and local business. Schools should be resourced so that they can make a significant contribution to the regeneration of their

local community" (p.3). The vocational aspect of any provision will only be made in the latter stages of secondary Education. It is intended that it will be related to "both general employability skills and specific courses within a broad range of employment" (p.7).

Non-denominational schools will also be encouraged to develop specialisms from current positions of strength. These will include dance, music, visual and performing arts, sports and an "international school" focusing on foreign languages and cultures. Entry will typically come in the latter or senior years of secondary Education, with the Council assisting with transport costs.

The plan is that the 29 secondaries would be distributed across Glasgow so that no non-denominational school pupil would live more than 3 miles from a secondary school. Where a current school is closed, the area served by that school will be re-zoned to a neighbouring school. Pupils from the closing school will have the same right of transfer as all other pupils resident within the receiving school's revised catchment area. These pupils will also be able to make a placing request to any other school. The criteria for prioritising placing requests is to be revised[5] to give a high level of priority to a pupil living in an area formerly served by a closing school.

The Council indicates that "for many parents choice is a critical issue. Widening parental choice without a city-wide strategy would lead to high levels of frustration ... Choice must mean choosing from a range of equally or similarly attractive options" (p.4). The proposals signify an important departure from the territorial planning of comprehensive Education. The Council has recently consulted on the possibility "that the next step would be to abandon catchment areas for all secondary schools. Parents/guardians would instead make a placing request in any school in the city of their

[5] This requires a formal consultation with all school boards under the Education (Scotland) Act 1981

choice. If spaces were available, the young person would be given a place together with assistance with transport where the travelling distance from home to school was greater than 2 miles. ... If a parents' choice was unsuccessful, they would make further requests to schools which had spaces available. Again, assistance with transport would be provided" (p.11).

The success of the new strategy is seen as resting on the enhanced aspirations of parents, pupils and school staff resulting from increased investment and opportunity. This has to be welcomed. In terms of Education planning in Scotland, the proposals are indeed radical[6]. The positive discrimination in favour of regeneration alliance areas attempts to maintain the Council's redistributive objectives within a framework which attempts to tackle the socio-spatial "determinism" referred to in the literature and field work analysis. It is an attempt to break area based patterns of access to particular Educational experiences and resultant life chances against a backdrop of increased central government emphasis on the importance of parental involvement via the "Parents as Partners" proposals. The Council has also "bitten" on the issue of the continuing Educational viability of a number of under-capacity secondaries in its closure/rationalisation proposals.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the proposals will leave some traditional communities "school free", with the increased volume of placing requests further distorting links between particular schools and the catchments they were initially intended to serve. Moreover, such an approach will simply maintain (if not widen) existing inequalities as more aware parents find themselves better placed to exploit available opportunities.

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[6] "free choice" has been operating in some English authorities for some time (Adler *et al*, 1995)

However, the proposals must be viewed in the context of the following findings from the literature and the field work. Firstly, it is debatable whether any strong allegiance remains between schools and the various communities which fall within their catchments. At least, it is debatable whether the tenuous links justify continuation of a service which appears to be delivering limited improvements in attainment, expectations or aspirations in many locales. It could be also argued that "free choice" from a pool of 29 secondaries across the city is not a substantial shift in current policy and levels of opportunity. As a result, the proposed reduction in the number of schools (and associated re-zoning) does not appear to hugely challenge the territorial allegiances implied by some head teachers, school board members and parents in parts of the city. Placing requests have already undermined this focus in many of the more deprived areas across the city. Secondly, the current size of many of the catchments precludes the development or maintenance of these links, especially in deprived areas. Finally, and most controversially, it might be argued that entrenchment of spatially influenced expectations[7] requires to be challenged across the city and that distortion of the patterns of aspiration associated with traditional residential factors would in fact be healthy. In short, the "centres of excellence" approach in a rationalised system may deliver enhancements in attainment levels and access to life chances across the board which are patently absent under the current system. "Free choice" may also require many parents currently disinterested in the Education system to give much more attention to the experiences on offer in different areas. Such heightened awareness may be an important first step in the raising of awareness and interest in participation required to make the "Parents as Partners" proposals work.

[7] relating to Hamnett's (1996) occupational hierarchy and traditional patterns of tenure

Administering/Governing Intra-Urban Spaces and Theories of Local Government

It has been argued that the failure of local government to address civil society calls for greater accountability, reduced bureaucracy and improved services played a large part in allowing the New Right to impose its own solutions to the perceived inadequacies (Stoker, 1989; Stewart, 1992). The power and autonomy of local authorities has been gradually reduced by increased centralism, fiscal pressures, growing reliance on contractual and partnership arrangements and the devolution of control to local areas or alternative providers (Stoker, 1989; Isaac-Henry, 1997). Under these circumstances, questions arise as to whether local space continues to be managed adequately by local government or whether increased devolution of management authority to local groups and other elements of the public, private or voluntary sectors would prove more effective (Gyford, 1991). Both the privatisation of space and increased public participation were high on the agenda of the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and early 1990s. The issue rightly remains relevant to the new Labour Government. The development of increased partnership working appears to offer the optimum solution in terms of planning, management, delivery and access to varying sources of capital and revenue resources[8].

Whilst perceptions of the essential redistributive role of local government are outlined in the previous section, Keane (1988) urges local authorities to share their power base with local interest groups in an attempt to "vitalise civil society" (in Gyford, 1991, p.27) and adequately meet local need in the face of increased centralism. This links closely with calls from Stewart (1983), Walsh (1989) and Stoker (1991) for increased participatory democracy to supplement representative democracy. A key

[8] as indicated in the Glasgow Unitary Authority proposals

issue involves finding an adequate balance to ensure the necessary pluralism whilst avoiding fragmentation, duplication and the growth of sectionalism. There is substantial evidence from across public services of how attempts to democratise decision-making have been exploited by elite sectional interests at the expense of increased representation from across communities or bands of interest (Dunleavy, 1980; Stoker, 1991; Gyford, 1991). The ability of "vested interests" to access influence and service goods needs to be countered by an element of retained central control until more collective forms of representation can be nurtured within local civil society. The danger is that such "central control" will dampen down the development of more collective representations of civil society. The role of local government will therefore be to support such representation rather than gatekeep its development through the retention of all aspects of decision-making. Whether an inability to walk this thin line in the past has resulted in the failure of local government to effectively devolve power and responsibility is certainly a possibility. Regardless, the "Parents as Partners" proposals emphasise the importance of this occurring in the future. The research has pointed to increasing socio-spatial inequality within the city, with attempts to redress socio-economic disparities undermined by the loss of the redistributive capacity of the local authority. In the case study, a "system" of Education provision within Glasgow had been maintained for the time being through the adequacy of the DMR funding formulae, support from the centre and a shared practitioner and board member ethos towards the strategic objectives of the former Regional Council. A significant element of local authority control, forward planning and redistribution also remained. Indeed, one of the most extensively expressed concerns over opting out of local authority control related to this loss of such strategic capacity and the effects this would have on both GMS schools and those remaining under LEA control. A similar loss of such "overseeing"

and redistributive capacity in other areas of governance and public service provision would appear to facilitate the type of fragmentation and duplication feared by head teachers in their field. Local government must continue to play a primary role in managing local space as a result.

This is not to negate the contribution of partnership working and increased civil society involvement in shaping priorities, solutions and services as part of that process. Decentralisation, Best Value, community planning, external funding criteria and tightening resources all point to an increase in the enabling role of local government. This need not be at the expense of local authority power. Indeed, the growing emphasis on community planning by the incoming Labour Government points to a central role for democratically elected local authorities in devising solutions for individual "communities" in partnership with local civil society and other public (including central government), private and voluntary bodies (Stewart, 1995). This will involve a strong element of consensus and compromise across the partnerships established to tackle local priorities. Personal experience suggests that this has not always been the case in the past due to the differing priorities and boundaries of public agencies and varying chains of upward and downward accountability. On occasion, there is a tendency for each body/partner to come to the table keen to protect their own agenda. This necessarily requires an element of compromise in the resultant outcomes rather than the preferred collaboration. In addition, shared visions and objectives may not be translated into allocated, resourced and timetabled actions, undermining the extent to which their progression becomes an integral part of each agency's work programme and reducing the opportunities for a synergy of effort. As a result, chains of accountability for implementing actions may be blurred as elected members and agency officers remain

uncertain as to the priority to be given to individual actions often considered as "additional or subsidiary" to more directly specified core activity.

Community planning supports a localist interpretation of "enabling community government", facilitating a strong element of the pluralist approach advocated by Stewart (1983, 1995), Keane (1988), Walsh (1989) and Stoker (1991). Success appears dependent on ensuring an essential element of local civil society involvement. The emphasis on consumerism under the New Right has highlighted required improvements in service standards, but has arguably done little to assist government in designing sensitive solutions to identified and shared local priorities. Building on the communitarianist ethos presents one possible option. Changes in approach are therefore required if community governance is to work. In addition to the increased reliance on partnership working, Best Value approaches must see local authorities more effectively engaging the breadth of civil society with a view to devising an agreed and shared approach to meeting local priorities. Local authorities have traditionally approached community liaison through community councils, local interest groups, user consultation and discussions with other local agencies. Interaction with the business community and the local media in many areas has been poorly developed. Whilst more "top down" than communitarianists would advocate, there is a need to exploit these channels in an attempt to raise local awareness of the action being taken by local authorities and their partners to address the breadth of local concerns. Such channels (especially the local media) must also be used proactively to promote shared responsibility and encourage more collective forms of action. Environmental and charitable issues are commonly tackled in this manner.

In addition, increasing levels of awareness and understanding of the duties of local government and the constraints under which it operates are essential if informed

civil society input on priorities and services is to be forthcoming. The development, refinement and promotion of area/neighbourhood committees and open forums is also essential, with more locally accountable decision-taking and discussion of relevant topics encouraging public interest and potentially pushing up voter turnout at local elections. Improved information on the nature and standard of services available is also of primary importance. A MORI survey[9] of public perception of local government pointed to "A-Zs of Services" being the single most important channel of communicating local authority responsibilities and services.

Finally, the type of "citizen development programmes" being run by some local authorities in their primary and secondary schools may be fundamental to any moves to develop active citizenship. Many projects involve informing children from primary school upwards about central and local government organisation and operation, the nature of the democratic process and the responsibilities of individuals as members of the community. Whilst a medium to long term process, the education of young people as to their rights *and* responsibilities as citizens may be of primary significance as a means of encouraging a bottom-up ethos of active citizenship.

The research findings and subsequent discussion highlight a number of issues relating to the ongoing relevance of public choice theory, localism and communitarianism. These were discussed at some length towards the end of Chapter 9. Further comments are necessary in light of the points raised above. Elements of public choice theory (including parental choice) appear to retain their relevance as factors influencing governance and service provision. Despite the debatable benefits in terms of service improvement as a result of competition, individual choice has been popular with consumers across a range of local authority services. As suggested earlier, any attempt

[9] reported in the Local Government Chronicle of 12 December 1997

to remove such consumer freedoms would undoubtedly be politically damaging. Moreover, competition and increased participation (although limited) has proved useful in enhancing the fiscal and managerial accountability of local authority officers, in turn helping them to identify opportunities for savings at a time of growing pressure on resources. Many officers (including the majority of head teachers interviewed) would appear reluctant to turn the clock back to a more centralised and bureaucratic regime. However, it is unlikely that the operation of the free market as a factor driving service production will continue to be given the same emphasis as it was in the late 1980s. This is partly due to the change in central government in 1997, but also reflects broader civil society concerns about the unfettered operation of market forces in public service provision. Chapters 3, 4 and 9 summarised many of the arguments regarding the inappropriateness of such forces in light of the varying ability of all groups across society to exercise choice and the resultant exacerbation of social divisions. Considerable reference was also made to the extent to which individualistic consumerism fragmented more collective interests, undermining community cohesion and the effective redistribution of public goods. These factors make continued reliance on public choice theory incompatible with broader central and local government policies on decentralisation, participation, partnership and redistribution.

Whilst retaining an element of choice and competition, a growing political and academic emphasis on localist theory expresses itself in government thinking on community planning, decentralisation and Best Value. The key challenge involves delivering an element of community governance whilst avoiding the loss of strategic capacity and economies of scale inherent in strong local government (Stewart, 1995). Local Government Reorganisation in Scotland in 1996 has undermined much of the "regionalism" apparent since 1973, with a resultant loss of strategic and redistributive

capacity in many areas. A further decline in this redistributive role at an individual authority level (as a result of increased decentralisation) may be socially regressive. The removal of a service such as Education from the locally planned arena poses similar challenges. For community governance to be effective, the balance between centralisation and decentralisation of control at a local authority level must be optimised to ensure that strategic oversight and redistributive capacity is not lost, whilst steps must also be taken to maximise the extent to which local civil society can participate in shaping priorities and agreeing acceptable levels and standards of service.

The issue of participation (or lack of it) remains at the centre of the debate about the appropriateness of localism. The research has pointed to extensive public ignorance and apathy towards participating in key decisions regarding the provision of the Education service; a service which significantly influences life chances. Voter turnout at local elections and the ever decreasing number of school boards are further indicators of public indifference. Keane (1988) and Corrigan (1997) point to the importance of revitalising civil society and channelling the resultant energy into the development of more collective forms of citizenship. This to some degree reflects the communitarianist potential of civil society referred to by Etzioni (1993) and Tam (1995). Cooke (1989) points to the fact that many local initiatives occur outside the formal sphere of local government, suggesting that the particular circumstances in each locale can often be a spur to bottom-up innovation. He appears to suggest that shared political or social mobilisation need not necessarily be a defensive response to particular issues imposed by central or local government. The proactive development of such a shared agenda appears to tie into the concept of communitarianist based citizenship. However, whilst attractive as a means of promoting a shared citizen agenda, the research findings and broader analysis of the literature suggest that the extent to which

a shared communitarianist ethic has developed is extremely debatable. As outlined in Chapter 8, it appears likely that some form of top down action (such as that referred to earlier in this section) is essential in the first instance if such a shared agenda is to evolve. Effective community governance could in turn evolve within this context thereafter. "Parents as Partners" may deliver this thereafter.

To conclude, some elements of public choice theory will likely remain as a means of facilitating consumer choice and encouraging strengthened fiscal and managerial accountability. The requirement for a form of redistribution to address spatially manifested inequalities emphasises an ongoing role for local government in strategically managing local space, a role which increasingly requires to be supported by participative democracy if any form of community governance is to evolve. However, for such a localist perspective to function effectively, an element of active citizenship must be nurtured from the top down. Appropriate channels and mechanisms to allow participation require to be established by local government as part of this process. Only if this occurs may some form of communitarianist perspective evolve amongst local communities. A key role of local government in the future may be to fan the flames of any nascent citizen agenda. In light of the general trends towards centralism (likely to continue under a developing Scottish Parliament), both citizens and local government have an interest in ensuring that this happens effectively.

Effects of Changes in the Tri-Partite Relationship on the Socio-Political Geography of the City

The literature details substantial changes in the dynamic tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society since the Conservatives came to power nationally in 1979. The differential within this relationship has swung away from local government in the 1980s and 1990s as power have been increasingly centralised, with local discretion and autonomy being undermined as a result. At the same time, control of a range of functions has been devolved to a sub local authority level or shared with other public and private agencies through the imposition of processes aimed at strengthening fiscal, managerial and democratic accountability. Such a process has gone hand in hand with increased consumer expectations of local authority services and growing civil society demands for reduced bureaucracy, increased accountability and closer scrutiny of the behaviour of public figures and agencies.

These developments have taken place against the backdrop of complex local circumstances, whereby macro level economic restructuring has impinged to varying degrees on each locale, altering the nature of the socio-political geography of all areas. Changing residential trends have also been apparent, partly in response to macro level change, but also as a result of shifting patterns of individual consumption, the growth in home ownership, improved transport links and ongoing processes of urban regeneration.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Hamnett (1996) argues that the work of Esping-Anderson (1993) points to a growth in professionalisation across western cities, manifesting itself in increased income polarisation between professionals and those on

welfare benefits/supplemented incomes, but reduced occupational polarisation within the economically active population. The socio-political geography of cities in general are thus changing as those professionals best placed to exploit opportunities to access influence and service goods (both public and private) do so at the expense of a "residual" section at (or off) the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Traditional tenure patterns in the UK give these trends a distinct spatial expression.

The complexity of underlying and developing socio-economic trends make it difficult to draw clear causal links between isolated factors and apparent changes in the geography of any place. In saying that, certain phenomena have been identified as a result of the research which indicate that Educational reforms have further contributed to increasing the gap between professionals and the residual groups at/off the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. The socio-political geography of the city has thus been influenced by changes in the tri-partite relationship, whether directly due to alterations in the power differential between central and local government or as a result of subsequently imposed processes. Firstly, as growing civil society unrest aided the imposition of the New Right agenda on local authorities, the resulting patterns of parental choice have undermined an element of community cohesion and altered patterns of territorial allegiance across the city. This is especially the case amongst households more able to exploit choice due to higher levels of awareness, expectation and motivation (Bondi, 1988; Barns and Williams, 1997; Gewirtz *et al*, 1995). As discussed earlier, such households have both greater physical and social mobility within the city, leaving a residue of households less able to express informed choice. In addition, the children in such residual households are more likely to attend schools with lower levels of attainment and discipline, thus decreasing their life chances relative to more mobile pupils. The research also indicates that greater levels of awareness and

motivation allow parents from professional households to participate more effectively in other ways, further increasing the extent to which they can access a whole range of public goods. Increased socio-spatial inequality results from a combination of these factors.

Secondly, such altering patterns of service consumption exacerbate changing residential and demographic trends to undermine the Educational and financial viability of some schools. These are typically those in more deprived areas, characterised by lower levels of attainment/discipline and a low roll versus capacity. Whilst closure/merger of secondary schools has been limited to date, the forthcoming programme of rationalisation discussed earlier is likely to remove many neighbourhood schools, further undermining community cohesion and altering patterns of territorial allegiance across the city.

Thirdly, the loss of the strategic capacity of local government to redistribute in favour of more deprived areas has been a further development of the shift of power to the centre and the devolution of control to local areas. Poorly informed/planned devolution of budgets and decision-making powers can lead to a loss of economies of scale, fragment the redistributive capacity of local government and result in an element of duplication in effort.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored answers to the geographically focused research questions identified in the methodology chapter, considering the implications of socio-political and Education management changes during the 1980s and 1990s on particular

locales and the overall socio-political geography of the city. It has been apparent from the research that parents in more affluent locales have greater direct access to Educational goods and that higher income families in all locales tend to be more able and likely to exploit opportunities to express choice and opinion. This reflects the growth of professionalisation referred to by Hamnett (1996). The "locales" defined in the case study appear typically too expansive and socio-economically heterogeneous to produce simple and consistent inter-locale patterns of access to opportunity. However, the geographical manifestation of groups of higher income parents produces "pockets of opportunity" throughout the city, predominantly clustered in more affluent catchments/locales. To that end, inter and intra-locale variations in access to opportunity and resultant social mobility were apparent from the research.

It would be spatially deterministic to stress locale as a causal factor producing a distinctive social experience. However, the set of historical and socio-economic circumstances which strongly influence the nature of each locale also constrain or encourage opportunity and the resultant life chances of residents. Locale may subsequently influence or restrict the ability of individuals to break out of these circumstances, producing a spiral of decline or opportunity which exacerbates spatially manifested inequalities within the city. The proposals of Glasgow Unitary Authority for secondary school rationalisation and redevelopment may go some way towards alleviating these trends by weakening the links between schools and their traditional catchment areas and positively discriminating in favour of schools in the most deprived parts of the city. Despite the potential disruption to links between individual schools and their catchment communities, it is argued that entrenchment of spatially influenced expectations[10] requires to be challenged across the city and that distortion of the

[10] relating to Hamnett's (1996) occupational hierarchy and traditional patterns of tenure

patterns of aspiration associated with traditional residential factors would in fact be healthy.

Consumerist parental choice appears to play a role in undermining community cohesion, resulting in new patterns of socialisation, consumption and territorial allegiance amongst pupils. It is likely that such social anchors remain with pupils as they develop into adulthood, thus having long term effects on both individual and community focus. As highlighted above, the Glasgow Unitary Authority proposals may exacerbate the threat to community cohesion through the direct and implicit[11] extension of parental choice. In addition, the growth in individualism inherent in the consumer agenda generally inhibits the development of a more collective communitarianist ethos (regardless of actual physical mobility in and out of particular communities).

As socio-economic inequalities continue to manifest themselves spatially throughout the city, integrated area-based approaches to redistribution remain relevant as one means of positively discriminating in favour of individuals in more deprived areas. Such approaches complement attempts to improve opportunities and life chances focused directly at individuals. A reduction in the redistributive capacity of local government due to reorganisation and ongoing financial constraints points to the establishment of more effective partnership working if resources are to be pooled and targeted at identified local priorities. The Glasgow proposals for comprehensive Education recognise this. Within such partnership arrangements, local government retains the democratic mandate and strategic oversight to adequately administer and manage space on behalf of its communities. Central government emphasis on decentralisation, Best Value and community planning give credence to this argument. Ironically, the potential removal of Education to Scottish Parliament control will

[11] as a result of re-zoning and closure

increase the challenges of integrated area based redistribution and citizen involvement in service design. The effectiveness of partnership working requires to evolve quickly if these challenges are to be met.

Whilst elements of competition and choice (inherent to the public choice theory of the New Right) look certain to remain, community planning places increased emphasis on localist solutions to the problems of particular locales. More effective citizen participation is an essential element in such approaches if priorities are to be identified and locally relevant solutions applied. This will require a new approach by government to nurture increased participation and the development of a shared communitarianist approach to citizenship. The "Parents as Partners" proposals may be the next step in this process. Elements of each theory of local government discussed in Chapter 2 therefore remain relevant if local government and the communities it serves are to maintain and strengthen their relative position in the tri-partite relationship.

The geography of the city has altered as a result of macro-level economic restructuring, changing residential preferences and improved communications. Whilst increased professionalisation has reduced the extent of socio-economic polarisation within the city, the gap between professionals and those at/off the bottom of the occupational hierarchy appears to be widening. Changes in the nature of the tri-partite relationship have also had some tangible effects as the capacity of local government to redistribute in favour of disadvantaged groups/locales has been undermined and service consumption preferences have both produced new territorial allegiances and emphasised spatially manifested inequalities. The key challenge ahead for local government is to alleviate these inequalities within a shrinking resource base. This is likely to require increased and more effective partnership working, innovative solutions in service

production and proactive steps to engage the breadth of civil society in identifying and sharing priorities, solutions and mutual responsibilities.

The implications of the Glasgow proposals for the future socio-political geography of the city are awaited with interest. Initial consideration points to the possibility that rationalisation and increased parental choice may further detach the "residual" population from the opportunities to exert influence and/or access service goods available to those further up the occupational hierarchy. Positive discrimination in favour of schools in regeneration alliance areas may alleviate this to some extent, especially if any "free choice" scheme is designed to prove easily consumable by parents from poorer backgrounds. However, there will always be a proportion of needy households unable to grasp the opportunities made available to them.

It is more likely that the proposals will challenge rather than re-affirm traditional patterns of socio-spatial entrenchment, weakening the almost deterministic links which currently exist between socio-economic background and subsequent aspirations, expectations and access to influence and service goods. Whilst it could be argued that this poses a threat to notions of the importance of links between schools and their surrounding communities, it is concluded that the perpetuation and widening of social divides inherent in the *status quo* requires a form of radical action by the local authority. This conclusion is based not only on consideration of the inequitable outcomes of the operation of the free market but also on the absence of additional resources to invest in the city's currently faltering system.

In challenging the links between schools and geographically proximate communities, the proposals might be seen as questioning the relevance of localist or communitarianist approaches to the development of active citizenship (using channels for involvement in Education). In short, does the creation of a fragmented and

disparate catchment preclude the development of a shared civil society agenda for Education? From a consumerist perspective, the school should become a common focus to those attending (or sending their children) irrespective of their place of residence. The fact that any notion of citizenship would imply more collective concerns for the nature and quality of Education across the city suggests that the maintenance of a comprehensive system would allow such a shared agenda to evolve. As indicated in the critique of the "Parents as Partners" proposals, this would be dependent on the concurrent development of more effective channels for broad parental participation in the planning and management of the service.

From the geographical perspective, the proposed abandonment of school catchment zoning by the city council may challenge long-standing patterns of territorial allegiance within the city. It could be argued that the scale of the proposals (in terms of the reduction in the number of secondary schools) is insufficiently significant to *impose* huge changes in patterns of service consumption. However, the opportunities offered by de-zoning and the likely promotion of free choice within the city could *encourage* patterns of consumption which alter such territorial allegiances and further fragment individual locales. This is symptomatic of the more fluid and dynamic nature of consumption within the post-Fordist city, evident in geographical patterns of socialisation and leisure pursuits. To some degree, the de-zoning proposals acknowledge this environment, encouraging individuals to move beyond the boundaries of their residentially-based territorial allegiances to exploit opportunity elsewhere. On the basis that territorial factors can influence expectations and life chances, disruption to traditional patterns of allegiance may deliver tangible benefits in terms of access to opportunity which outweigh the loss of any less tangible benefits associated with collective ideas of locale. By "freeing up" and resourcing/supporting choice within the

city and investing in schools in traditionally more deprived areas, the council appears to be striving to ensure that ability to access such opportunities are less elitist and individualistically-oriented than those under the existing parental choice arrangements.

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Chapter 11 - Conclusion

Through examination of changes in Education management during the 1980s and 1990s, the study has focused on analysis of the factors altering the nature of the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. From an Education perspective, it has assessed aspects of the power differential between each of these "parties", exploring shifts in patterns of autonomy and accountability associated with changes in the envisaged roles, mandate and responsibilities of local government. The relevance of the findings has been abstracted and applied at a more general level. The study has also acknowledged the important context of the broader social and ideological dynamism which frames the activity of government and influences the behaviour of civil society. Against this backdrop, it has explored the extent to which these broader factors (predominantly a purported move from Fordism to post-Fordism and the New Right ideology of central government in the 1980s and 1990s) interact with local circumstances to produce complex spatially-manifested patterns of access, expectation and opportunity effecting the life chances of individuals within and between different locales. This in turn has been seen to impinge on the socio-political geography of the city. The dynamic relationships and the theories of local government which underpin the analysis were modelled in Figure 1.1.

This final chapter draws conclusions from the study findings, summarising these prior to considering how proposed and predicted changes in future governance and public service provision may further impinge on the socio-political geography of the city. It considers the ongoing relevance of the theories of local government raised in Chapter 2 and discusses the "compromise" which exponents of each theory may have to

accept in the face of the competing demands of each party in the complex tri-partite relationship.

Factors Changing the Nature of the Tri-Partite Relationship and the Main Shifts in Power

Analysis of the literature and consideration of the subsequent field work has consistently indicated the factors which are important in shaping and influencing the nature of the tri-partite relationship between central government, local government and civil society. Macro-level economic restructuring has imposed itself unevenly on existing socio-economic trends across the city (Gyford, 1991; Stoker, 1991). As the outcomes of these changes have not manifested themselves uniformly across locales, there has been a general increase in the diversity of local populations within cities. This has expressed itself in complex patterns of demand, political patronage, access to influence and service consumption. As a result, the pressure which civil society exerts on both tiers of government is uneven, with the interests of arguably "less needy" but more articulate groups competing with the greater needs of often less expressive communities. A pragmatic response has been required by central and local government in their attempts to alleviate spatially manifested inequalities within and between different areas. Despite this, dogmatic or inflexible responses by central and local government have often exacerbated problems of participation and access to service goods in certain areas.

An associated and uneven growth in public demand for (and expectation of) more flexible government and service delivery followed the private sector transition from Fordist to post-Fordist patterns of service production and consumption. This

required a response by government in terms of improved services, increased choice and strengthened accountability. During the early 1980s, the Thatcher-led Conservative Government managed to translate the civil society pressure exerted at a national level into an agenda aimed at cutting public expenditure, reducing the traditional bureaucracy and paternalism of local government and challenging the strength of public sector trades unions. The resultant imposition of policies aimed at fiscal restraint, deregulation and competition were met defensively by local government, heightening central/local tensions (Stoker, 1991; Isaac-Henry, 1997). This arguably came at the same time as local authorities were translating an awareness of civil society demands at a local level into managerialist responses aimed at reducing bureaucracy and increasing the customer orientation of service provision. These are discussed shortly. Despite the retention of an element of local government paternalism, the responses to this combination of pressures have manifest themselves in attempts to increase fiscal, managerial and democratic accountability, some moves towards post-Fordist service production and an increase in choice for service consumers (Stoker, 1991; Walsh, 1989 and 1995). The New Right agenda of the Conservative government(s) appears to have been the more significant driver of change, with consumers exploiting subsequent opportunities and pressing for further developments as their awareness and expectations rise.

The New Right agenda also manifested itself in the reduction of local authority fiscal autonomy as a result of budgetary restraint, the imposition of capping, the removal of non-domestic rate setting to central government and an increase in the ringfencing of specific resource allocations (Midwinter, 1984). This combined with increased regulation, CCT and the removal of control over services such as Further Education and Water and Sewerage served to undermine the power of local government *vis-à-vis* central government (Stoker, 1991). At the same time,

decentralisation and fragmentation of control to more local levels and heightened public participation and consumer influence saw a potential devolution of power away from local government towards civil society. The apparently paradoxical trends towards centralisation and devolution are likely to continue, with the "Parents as Partners" proposals alone potentially facilitating both. The traditional nature of the tri-partite relationship has changed (and will continue to change) inexorably as a result.

In addition to imposed change from the centre, civil society demands also played a part in changing the nature of the tri-partite relationship. As discussed earlier, these have been exerted at a national and local level, the former facilitating much of the New Right agenda in public service provision in the 1980s and 1990s. At the local level, demand has manifested themselves in three ways (adapted from Walsh, 1989; Stoker, 1991; Gyford, 1991). Firstly, general civil society pressure for improved services and greater accountability has been expressed through the local media, opinion poll feedback and a non service-specific public intransigence to the operation of local authorities. Secondly, a growing number of single or multiple issue interest and pressure groups increasingly exert influence on the decision-making process, articulating often competing demands on the local political system. Finally, growing consumer demands for improved services and rights of redress have resulted in the growth of "Charterism", complaints procedures and the publication of information on service levels and standards. The general absence of collective expression of needs and preferences has added to the complexity of balancing articulated demands against the backdrop of complex inter-locale inequalities in access to influence and service goods. It might be argued that the absence of such collective expression has hindered local government in its attempts to genuinely empower communities and individuals. It has

certainly increased the scepticism of more paternalistic elements of local government as to the validity of demands for such empowerment.

The Accountability and Autonomy of Local Government

The combination of pressures from central government and civil society have undoubtedly increased the fiscal, managerial and democratic accountability of local government during the 1980s and 1990s (Isaac-Henry, 1997; Stoker, 1991; Midwinter, 1984). This has come via increased central regulation and scrutiny of local authority operation, the imposition of a formal contract culture in many areas of service activity and local government's own managerialist and democratic responses to the demands of civil society (predominantly managerial and political decentralisation). As has been discussed at length, a general public apathy and lack of a broad desire amongst citizens to participate in the channels made available to them has hindered the extent of much of this accountability in practice. Nonetheless, local authority processes are typically more transparent as a result, with budgetary devolution across services increasing fiscal and managerial accountability to more local populations at the sub authority level (Burns, 1997; Hambleton and Hoggett, 1990; Hambleton *et al*, 1989). The empowerment of elected or nominated groups of local citizens to agree and monitor a range of local services (including Education as part of the "Parents as Partners" proposals) may actually increase the accountability of these groups at the expense of local authority officers and members. Whilst they may be more accountable to the local population, the chain of upward accountability to the local authority or central government would appear to be weakened. Mechanisms to ensure probity and stewardship (the fiscal accountability referred to above) may become of increased relevance under any such

devolved arrangements. Further mechanisms will be required to ensure that the agenda is not hijacked by managerially and democratically unaccountable and non-representative groups (Dearlove, 1973; Newton, 1976; Stoker, 1991).

A further paradox also exists at the central/local government level. In short, the increase in fiscal, managerial and democratic accountability has occurred concurrently with the reduction in local authority discretion and autonomy referred to above. There are strong links between autonomy and democratic and managerial accountability. Whether the proposed removal of capping and the possible return of non-domestic rate setting to local government addresses this is extremely debatable. In reality, it seems unlikely that the Labour Government will only return autonomy to local authorities once they have demonstrated through their approaches to Best Value and decentralisation that they can be relied on to manage local governance and service provision in the absence of strict central controls. The traditional argument of accountability through the ballot box is increasingly regarded as untenable, although attempts to push up voter turnout and increase the frequency of member exposure to the electorate are central to the Labour Government's current proposals for democratic renewal. Similar limitations on autonomy and accountability at a sub-authority level are likely in the event that further control over budgets and performance monitoring are devolved to community groups. In short, restrictions in discretion will limit the managerial and democratic accountability of such groups. Clear rules of operation will be required if the threat to autonomy is to be balanced against the dangers of elitist or sectional hijacking mentioned earlier.

Finally, some attention will need to be paid to the possible blurring or fragmenting of chains of accountability inherent in decentralised or partnership working. Burns (1997) made reference to this in the context of Scottish local authority

decentralisation schemes. The avoidance of such an outcome would appear to be dependent on partner or group agreement of aims, objectives and responsibilities and the subsequent and ongoing effective communication of these to all interested parties. Some mechanisms for ensuring stakeholder input into identifying priorities and agreeing parameters of operation will be even more important under such arrangements than they are under direct provision of services by local authorities. "Parents as Partners" and the extension of Best value to other public agencies may be a means of achieving this.

Implications for Locales and the Socio-Political Geography of the City

As discussed at length in Chapter 10, the changes in the tri-partite relationship have both re-affirmed some elements of inter-locale inequalities whilst altering others. Access to influence/service goods and associated life chances varies across the city dependent on the ability and likelihood of individuals to grasp available opportunities. This has been exacerbated by the imposition of a more market oriented agenda by consecutive Conservative governments and the challenge this poses to the traditionally more planned approach of local authorities to redressing disadvantage.

It has been argued that the growth of professionalisation and the residualisation of lower income groups is broadly apparent in many western cities following economic restructuring (Sassen, 1991; Hamnett, 1996). The tendency for the occupational hierarchy to mirror patterns of tenure across UK cities has given such a trend a distinct spatial manifestation. Inter-locale and inter-group redistribution is typically aimed at extending opportunities to disenfranchised groups, often those households at or off the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Consumerist empowerment within the tri-partite relationship has both re-affirmed the relative advantage of professional groups and

undermined the capacity of local government to tackle area-based inequality and redistribute accordingly. Inequality has widened as a result.

In terms of *altering* the socio-political geography of the city, increased choice has challenged traditional patterns of service consumption. This has on occasion broken the links between service outlets (in this case schools) and their traditional "catchment" communities, producing new patterns of socialisation (e.g. in terms of leisure consumption) and territorial allegiance. Professional households in all catchments appear more able and likely to make choices. Moreover, territoriality has remained a significant feature in more deprived areas, once again restricting opportunity to some individuals in those areas. Such territoriality appears to reflect both psychological allegiances with defined areas and the lack (or lack of awareness) of sufficiently different service experiences within affordable geographical proximity. Nonetheless, a broad picture of social and physical entrenchment of "residual" households across the city becomes apparent. The aspirations, expectations and life chances of individuals from such households are typically lower than those from more professional backgrounds. The challenge for government is to alleviate this entrenchment to extend the choice (and ability to choose) available from the growth of reliance in the market to all households. An alternative restriction on choice would be politically unpalatable.

Challenging Entrenchment and Nurturing Participation

A number of factors make change desirable and inevitable. Firstly, socio-spatial entrenchment is limiting the aspirations, expectations and life chances of households at or off the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Secondly, the availability of consumer

choice is now embedded in the culture of civil society, expressing itself across the range of private and public services. Since this embeds socio-spatial entrenchment, some form of government action is required to alleviate this. Thirdly, in the current political and economic climate, it is unlikely that additional resources will be made available to local government to fund grandiose (and arguably paternalistic) programmes of area based redistribution. Finally, under capacity in many secondary schools within Glasgow is threatening the Educational viability of those schools and undermining the capacity of the local authority to invest resources in the overall system. The spiralling capital and revenue costs of maintaining these establishments requires to be addressed in terms of financial stewardship alone (Accounts Commission, 1998), never mind the drain such allocation is having on the overall fiscal ability and discretion of the local authority.

The explicit way forward has manifested itself so far in the proposals of Glasgow City Council to rationalise its current secondary school provision and the Labour Government's proposals to empower school boards at the expense of head teachers. Both are related developments, symptomatic of broader trends in public service provision. The eventual introduction of "free choice" to a slimmed down and revitalised number of Glasgow secondary schools mirrors similar initiatives in England and Wales (Adler *et al*, 1995). Against the backdrop of the proposed improvements in Educational inputs and processes across the city, the proposals are aimed at breaking the link between the socio-economic nature of the catchment and the resultant Educational outcomes in two ways. Firstly, patterns of expectation and aspiration will be challenged by a more diverse pupil population and new patterns of socialisation and allegiance as increasing numbers of pupils are encouraged and supported to attend schools outwith their neighbourhoods. Secondly, area based positive discrimination will be retained to ensure that those revitalised schools within more deprived

catchments offer more appropriate secondary curricula aimed at preparation for employment and entering further Education. Part of the education process in these areas must involve raising expectations and awareness of choices and opportunities; schools will need to be less defensive in the future than many have become in the face of the effects of parental choice on their ongoing viability. As outlined in more detail in Chapter 10, these proposals alone will not alleviate long-standing socio-economic inequalities. In addition, they appear to challenge notions of community cohesion and shared community identity. However, they do offer an innovative opportunity for investment in Education and a move away from a system which is currently re-affirming existing disparities.

It is important to consider the proposals within the context of the "Parents as Partners" agenda. The transfer of responsibilities to school boards may indeed be a move to facilitate greater local community involvement in service planning and monitoring in the face of an eventual removal of the service from local government control. Should this *not* be the case, then the proposals are an interesting (if potentially dangerous) attempt to kick start a broader community interest in school management patently absent in the case study schools. Should this succeed, then the moves will be rightly applauded. However, the potential for elitism and fragmented fiscal and managerial accountability are clear.

In the event that the service is transferred from local authority control to the Scottish Parliament, the proposals form an interesting basis for the retention of local input into a more centrally planned approach. As with most public services, delivery will remain local regardless of centralisation of planning, production and support. The debate is still to be forthcoming about which level Education (and indeed all public services) are best planned, monitored and delivered come the installation of a Scottish

Parliament. However, the growth in partnership working, community planning and enabling point to a key question across public service provision. In short, how is effective citizen participation to be facilitated within such apparently complex arrangements?

For Education, the analysis of influencing factors and subsequent strategic planning may become a matter for the Scottish Parliament. As it is currently undertaken by the Scottish Office Education Department, there is no obvious threat to local autonomy in this alone. Inter-area redistribution is also currently undertaken nationally by the Scottish Office in liaison with COSLA. This would continue under a Scottish Parliament. However, the *de facto* opt out from local authority control inferred by opponents of the "Parents as Partners" proposals points to an obvious change, with the role of the board to agree and manage the budget, monitor and review performance, oversee the appointment of staff and decide on school policy. Parents and citizens will be expected to input through the board; their mandate and accountability are strengthened as a result, validating their position and further increasing their power and influence. This leaves a role for the local authority concurrent with the proposed community planning responsibilities (put simply, of identifying, co-ordinating and championing causes of local concern across public service activity). This is currently the case with local authorities informal "stewardship" of Water and Sewerage services and the activity of Health Boards and Local Enterprise Companies. Within local government services, the proposed large scale voluntary stock transfers to local housing companies point to similar developments in public Housing. Trust status for Leisure facilities is also becoming common. The key for the local authority is to work effectively with the appropriate partners[1] to influence the level and shape of delivered

[1] In Education, this might be the schools, the Scottish Office and the local enterprise company

services in terms of identified need in the area. Partnership working obviously requires to become far more formal and effective for this to work adequately. Despite assertions to the contrary, Education would not form the precedent in such an approach to public service planning, production/procurement and monitoring.

One key issue does relate to the ability of the state to redistribute within such "matrix" arrangements. The loss of direct control should not be seen as precluding this. The growth in partnership working during the 1990s has been extensive as government has engaged the private and voluntary sectors to supplement inter-agency working across public bodies. This now manifests itself in statutory joint working in Community Care and Health Planning and the development of strategic approaches to Housing and Economic Development. Indeed, local government's role has been more substantive in the 1990s than was the case in many of the "quango" arrangements of the late 1980s (such as Urban Development Corporations and other government sponsored regeneration strategies). There appears to be no reason why similar arrangements cannot ensure adequate area-based redistribution in the event of the removal of Education from local government control. Indeed, it appears likely that such partnership working would deliver more holistic approaches to the alleviation of complex inter-locale inequalities. An effective outcome would counter the more paternalistic local government concerns about the distancing of the planning and delivery of the current service from what seems a rather tenuous democratic mandate.

Implications for the Future Socio-Economic Geography of the City

So what might be the implications for the future socio-political geography of the city as a result of the Glasgow rationalisation/investment proposals and the empowerment of school boards (whether under LEA or Scottish Office control)? First of all, these cannot be considered in isolation. The proposals and associated extension of parental choice offer opportunities to build on broader changes in tenure, public and private service consumption and re-investment. For example, moves to diversify traditional patterns of tenure have been ongoing since the early 1980s. Initial "right-to-buy" legislation has been supplemented by "choose a landlord" schemes, the growth of housing associations and a plethora of private new build projects (to buy or rent) across the city. In short, the traditional stereotype of almost deterministic links between socio-economic status and tenure are *becoming* less apparent. This is occurring at the same time as Hamnett's (1996) increased professionalisation, the growth in parental choice and the formalisation of partnership working in areas of deprivation. Traditional area based social polarisation seems likely to be diluted as a result. This is supported by the council's encouragement of new private housing in more deprived areas traditionally associated with large scale public housing estates. A number of sites have already been prepared in areas including Drumchapel, Castlemilk, Possil and Blackhill. However, only where opportunities to raise aspirations and expectations are grasped by currently disenfranchised households, and government can effectively intervene to redistribute, will underlying patterns of socio-spatial inequality start to be addressed.

The transfer of power from head teachers to school boards might be considered as one step in a raft of proposals aimed at democratising local government. Alternatively, it may be the first step in moves aimed at a large scale *de facto* opt out as

a first step in the removal of the service to Scottish parliament control. Presuming that it is only the former, the dangers of elitist control and fragmented accountability have already been highlighted. The reported lack of desire of school board members to take on the additional powers associated with the "Parents as Partners" proposals is likely to be a significant additional stumbling block (The Herald, 14 August 1998). However, in the event that parent and citizen interest in Education management can be nurtured, "Parents as Partners" could act as an important step in the direction of supporting the development of more collective responsibilities for service inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes than is apparent under the *status quo*. This could in turn be a step towards the type of communitarianist ethos envisaged by Etzioni (1993) and Tam (1995), encouraging the development of a form of locale-based shared agenda in the medium to long-term. New patterns of socialisation, allegiance and collective responsibility could follow, although these required to be supported and "fanned" by the local authority and/or the partnership arrangements operating in each area. Regardless, this seems some way off, with the emphasis at the moment on fragmenting the shared experience of restricted opportunity apparent in many parts of the city.

As outlined in Chapter 9, the future operation of local government must draw on elements of the public choice, localist and communitarian perspectives. Choice in service consumption is here to stay, both as a result of its popularity with the electorate and the associated discipline competition has brought to public sector management at a time of resource constriction and demands for greater accountability and value for money. This is likely to occur against a backdrop of increased top-down attempts to "kick-start" bottom-up participation and nurture a sense of shared responsibility for the management of local space. The "Parents as Partners" proposals are aimed at supporting such processes, supplementing consumer rights with citizen responsibilities

by increasing the accountability of participants on school boards. Whilst localists may view the encroachment of a Scottish Parliament with increasing concern, the challenge for local government is to effectively develop its approach to community planning to ensure that it plays a strong role in subsequent partnership arrangements for planning, delivering/procuring and monitoring services. If it can achieve this, then the stability of local government may be ensured after a long period of attrition within the tri-partite relationship.

As for the future geography of the city, changes in service consumption and tenure have already begun to alter traditional patterns of residence and allegiance. This is beginning to challenge links between residential background and access to influence, life chances and service goods. The de-zoning proposals for public Education in the city will further weaken these links as parents and pupils benefit from open and supported choice and re-investment in the remaining schools. This takes place within the redistributive framework of the overarching social strategy, attempting to alleviate the inequalities apparent within the city. While traditional patterns of territorial allegiance to particular locales may be undermined, the more fluid and flexible environment within the post-Fordist city offers greater opportunities to individuals willing and able to access the channels being made available. Widening this access to opportunity is central to the city council proposals. Whether as a result the spatially based socio-economic inequality apparent in the city at the end of the Twentieth Century could become substantially less is a moot point.

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Appendix 4.1 - Strathclyde Regional Council: Deprivation Criteria

- Income support
- Housing Benefit
- Free School Meals
- Clothing Grants
- Total Unemployment
- Youth Unemployment
- Mortality
- Housing Tenure

TABLE 1 : DISTRICT RANKINGS ON SOCIAL INDICATORS

DISTRICT	INCOME SUPPORT		HOUSING BENEFIT		FREE SCHOOL MEALS	CLOTHING GRANTS	UNEMPLOYMENT		ALL CAUSE MORTALIT	HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE		
	TOTAL	ELDERLY	TOTAL	ELDERLY			TOTAL	YOUTH		OWNER OCC	PRIVATE RENTED	PUBLIC RENTED
ARGYLL AND BUTE	16	9	15	17	14	13	14	16	11	6	1	17
BEARS.& MILNG.	19	19	18	18	19	18	18	18	19	2	16	18
CLYDEBANK	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	6	2	16	3	4
CUMB.& KILSYTH	12	5	11	6	12	11	15	14	10	7	17	13
DUMBARTON	11	11	12	11	10	10	9	11	15	8	12	12
STRATHKELVIN	15	17	17	15	17	17	17	15	13	3	10	16
EASTWOOD	18	18	19	19	18	19	19	19	18	1	15	19
INVERCLYDE	5	4	5	8	4	4	7	5	4	14	5	6
RENFREW	10	14	9	10	6	9	11	9	8	10	8	10
GLASGOW	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	15	2	5
CLYDESDALE	13	13	13	14	15	16	13	13	12	11	4	11
E.KILBRIDE	17	15	16	13	16	15	16	17	17	4	19	14
HAMILTON	8	7	8	7	9	8	10	7	5	12	14	8
MONKLANDS	3	2	3	1	7	5	6	3	1	18	18	1
MOTHERWELL	7	8	6	5	8	6	5	4	6	19	13	2
CUMN.&DOON	6	10	4	4	3	3	3	2	7	17	7	3
CUNNINGHAME	4	12	10	12	5	7	4	8	9	9	11	9
KIL.&LOUDOUN	9	6	7	9	11	14	8	10	14	13	9	7
KYLE AND CARRICK	14	16	14	16	13	12	12	12	16	5	6	15

NOTE OF INFORMATION

TABLE 1 : Shows the District position on a range of social indicators compared to other Districts in Strathclyde
A score of 1 indicates the highest score for any indicator with 19 being lowest. For example Monklands District has the 3rd highest proportion of people dependent on income support while Glasgow has the highest compared to other Districts in the Region.
Table 2 of this appendix gives the actual percentage scores at District level for each indicator.

TABLE 2. AREA DESIGNATIONS

		DESIGNATION PRE 1991 CENSUS ANALYSIS			PROPOSED NEW DESIGNATION		
Local Committee	Area	APT	Other Area Of Need	[1]SIA	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Drumchapel	Drumchapel	✓		✓	✓		
Glasgow North	Possilpark	✓		✓			
	Milton	✓		✓			
	Springburn	✓		✓			
	Germiston	✓					
	Roystonhill	✓		✓			
	Molendinar	✓			✓		
	Barmulloch	✓	N. Barmulloch				
	Balornock	✓					
	Sighthill						
Glasgow North West	Ruchill	✓					
	Gairbraid/Botany Wyndford	✓	Gilshochill			✓	
	Woodside/Firhill	✓					
	Anderston		✓				
	Berkeley St					✓	
	East Woodlands	✓					✓
	Kelvingrove/ Yorkhill		✓				✓
	Partick		✓				✓
	Cadder		✓				✓
	Hillhead		Kelvinbridge				✓
	Garnethill		✓				✓
	Townhead		✓				✓
Glasgow West	Yoker South/ Langholm St*	✓					
	Scotstoun West*		✓				
	(Temple Shafton) now renamed Cloberhill/ Shafton	✓				✓	
	Yoker		North Yoker				
	Archerhill Rd/ Mill Rd						
	Lincoln Avenue						
	Scotstounhill						

[1] Special Initiative Area

* Now amalgamated as Yoker/Scotstoun.

		DESIGNATION PRE 1991 CENSUS ANALYSIS			PROPOSED NEW DESIGNATION		
Local Committee	**Area**	**APT**	**Other Area Of Need**	**SIA**	**Priority 1**	**Priority 2**	**Priority 3**
Greater Easter-house	Wellhouse/Easthall	✓					
	Garthamlock	✓					
	Queenslie	✓					
	Easterhouse	✓		✓			
	Ruchazie	✓			✓		
	Cranhill	✓					
	Barlanark	✓					
	North Craigend		✓				
East End	Haghill	✓					
	Parkhead	✓					
	Inner Gear	✓					
	Carntyne	✓					
	Shettleston	✓					
	Tollcross	✓			✓		
	Camlachie/ Reidvale		✓				
	Millbank						
	Greenfield/ Lightburn		✓				
	Riddrie						
	Carmyle		✓				✓
	Springboig		✓				✓
	Baillieston		✓				✓
Glasgow South East	Castlemilk	✓		✓	✓		
	(Circuit renamed) NW Cambuslang	✓					
	Cambuslang Halfway	✓				✓	
	Cambuslang Westburn	✓					
	North Toryglen		✓			✓	
	Whitlawburn		✓				
	Cathkin		✓			✓	
	Springhall		✓				
	Burnhill / Rutherglen		✓				✓
	Eastfield						✓
	Fernhill		✓				
	Princes St/ Rutherglen		✓				

		DESIGNATION PRE 1991 CENSUS ANALYSIS			PROPOSED NEW DESIGNATION		
Local Committee	**Area**	**APT**	**Other Area Of Need**	**SIA**	**Priority 1**	**Priority 2**	**Priority 3**
Glasgow South	Gorbals	✓		✓	✓		
	Shawbridge					✓	
	Govanhill	✓					✓
	East Pollokshields	✓					✓
	Holmlea Rd						✓
Glasgow South West	Govan	✓		✓	✓		
	Pollok	✓		✓			
	Priesthill/Nitshill	✓					
	Carnwadric/ Arden/ Kennishead	✓		✓	✓		
	Darnley		✓				
	Corkerhill		✓				✓
	Penilee		✓				✓
	Cardonald						✓

TABLE1: PRIORITY 1 AREAS IN GLASGOW

AREA	POPULATION	FACTOR SCORE	% UNEMPLOYMENT	% LONE PARENTS	% OVERCROWDING	% ADULT ILLNESS	% HOUSES VACANT	EDs IN WORST 1%	5%	10%	20%	30%	OTHER DESIGNATED STATUS ESPA	SCOTTISH HOMES	GRA	OTHER INITIATIVE	PARTNER-SHIP
DRUMCHAPEL	17998	1.580	39.3	45.6	5.8	15.3	11.9	5	25	11	13	7	X	X	X		
GLASGOW NORTH	52146	1.630	38.4	44.6	8.4	15.6	7.6	18	50	49	49	20	X	X	X		
EASTERHOUSE	40139	1.662	38.7	41.7	8.9	14.0	12.8	11	49	36	29	5	X	X	X		
EAST END	44916	1.360	32.0	35.6	8.9	17.5	5.4	8	42	37	54	16	X	X	X		
GOVAN	24133	1.082	27.3	35.1	7.5	12.6	6.5	3	15	15	27	12	X	X	X		
GORBALS	9300	2.007	41.5	51.6	8.4	20.9	9.4	4	21	13	3	2	X	X	X		
CASTLEMILK	18347	1.603	36.1	43.4	6.9	14.2	11.5	4	23	13	20	7	X	X	X		PART
GREATER POLLOK	29469	1.246	33.4	36.9	7.4	13.9	9.9	4	11	22	39	11	X	X	X		

TABLE 2: PRIORITY 2 AREAS

AREA	POPUL-ATION	FACTOR SCORE	% UNEMP-LOYMENT	% LONE PARENTS	% OVERCR-OWDING	% ADULT ILLNESS	% HOUSES VACANT	UNEMP & LONE PTS SCORE	EDs IN WORST 1%	EDs IN WORST 5%	EDs IN WORST 10%	EDs IN WORST 20%	EDs IN WORST 30%	OTHER DESIGNATED STATUS ESPA	OTHER INITIATIV	PARTNER -SHIP
WOODSIDE/MARYHILL	14943	1.299	31.9	43.3	7.5	16.8	3.5	1.638	1	8	16	18	9			
ANDERSTON/BERKELEY ST.	2933	1.367	38.4	29.7	6.9	16.7	5.4	1.082	1	1	4	5	3	PART		
SHAWBRIDGE	2903	1.233	32.7	45.3	4.4	17.3	3.5	1.755	0	0	5	6	1			
NORTH TORYGLEN	3935	1.020	35.1	43.5	3.1	15.8	2.7	1.893	0	0	2	9	1			
GLASGOW WEST	20024	0.936	25.9	36.9	6.0	15.8	3.9	-0.364	0	2	13	20	9			
CAMBUSLANG (NW/HALFWAY/WESTBURN)	5842	0.931	32.1	30.6	5.6	13.3	6.1	-0.092	0	2	2	7	5			
CATHKIN/SPRINGHALL/WHITLAWBURN	4402	0.762	30.3	40.5	4.1	12.1	1.7	1.166	0	0	1	6	5			

NOTE OF INFORMATION

The above table provides social/demographic information for areas which have been linked together.
The reasons for linking areas relate to possible groupings for Urban Programme purposes, Priority 2 Initiatives/Partnerships.

HEADTEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE **SCHOOL** .....

This questionnaire is an attempt to gather information as to how headteachers perceive recent initiatives in school management. The questionnaire asks you to respond to a number of statements made about education issues in general and how they have affected your school. Please indicate your opinion by ticking the box beside the response you agree with.

SECTION A - These questions relate specifically to the Region's decentralisation initiatives

1. What effect have the Region's decentralisation initiatives had on the running of the school ?

Very positive	Positive	Little or none	Negative	Very Negative
___	___	___	___	___
___	___	___	___	___

2. Has DMR been the most important single decentralisation initiative ? Yes ___ No ___

If no, what has ? ___ ___

3a. Do you think the devolution of decisions about school expenditure is a good thing in principle? Yes ___ No ___

If no, why not ? ___ ___

b. Do you think the devolution of decisions about school expenditure is a good thing in practice? Yes ___ No ___

If no, why not ? ___ ___

4a. What have been the main problems you have experienced in the implementation of DMR? Tick as many as you feel appropriate.

___ Insufficient time to deal with increased workload

___ Lack of sufficient training

___ Limited budgetary discretion

___ Other. Please specify. .....
.....
.....

b. Please rank those ticked.

5. **Have expectations about the advantages of DMR been justified ?** Yes ___ No ___

If no, in what ways ? ___ ___

6. **In what ways has budgetary responsibility changed your role as a headteacher ?**

7a. **Were you as a head teacher concerned about your new responsibilities prior to the introduction of DMR?** Yes ___ No ___

If yes, why ? ___ ___

b. **Did these foreseen problems materialise?** Yes ___ No ___

___ ___

8. **List what you perceive to be the aims of the decentralisation initiatives ?**

9. **What benefits will pupils and parents see from these initiatives?**

10. **What percentage of the schools total devolved budget do you effectively have control over after staffing costs are removed ?** ____%

11. **Do you think the decentralisation initiatives to date have gone far enough towards achieving their prescribed aims?** Yes ___ No ___

If no, in what areas would you like to see further developments ? ___ ___

12. **At which ONE of the following has decentralisation been predominantly aimed?**

___ Giving local schools more power

___ Making the Region's internal management simpler and more effective

___ Giving parents more say

___ Cutting costs

13. **Will that specified in your answer be the only benefit?** Yes ___ No ___

If no, what other benefits do you anticipate? ___ ___

14. **How will devolution of staff appointment decisions be of benefit to the school?**

15. **Who will typically be involved in making decisions about senior staff appointments?**

16. **Who will typically be involved in making decisions about other staff appointments?**

17. **How will the school be more responsive to pupils' needs as a result of the devolution of decisions on staff appointments?**

SECTION B

18. **What do you think the most important factors are in attracting pupils to a school through placing requests?**

19. **What do you think the most important factors are in a parent's decision not to send their child to a particular school?**

20. **How important do you think the level of attainment of pupils in the school is as a factor affecting such decisions?**

Very important	Quite important	Not important	Don't Know
—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—

21. **Do you think parents have real choice in deciding which school they would like their child to attend?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

22. **In your experience, what would you expect to be the effect of an influx of pupils through placing requests on overall levels of attainment in a school?**

Positive	Negative	Negligible	Don't Know
—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—

23. **In your experience, what would you expect to be the effect of a loss of pupils through placing requests on overall levels of attainment in a school?**

Positive	Negative	Negligible	Don't Know
—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—

24. **Does your school actively compete with neighbouring schools for pupils?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

If yes, in what ways?

25. **What affect have demographic patterns had on your school's roll?**

Gained pupils	None	Lost pupils
—	—	—
—	—	—

26. **What affect have changing residential patterns had on your school's roll?**

Gained pupils	None	Lost pupils
—	—	—
—	—	—

27. **Has your school's roll increased as a result of school closures in neighbouring areas?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

28. **Do you perceive your school to be a focal point within the community?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

29 a. **Do you think that placing requests undermine this concept of community?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

b. **Do you think that school closures undermine this concept?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

30. **Do you welcome the development of school boards?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

Why?

31. **Roughly what percentage of school board places are filled in your school?** ____

32. **How many people sit on the board?** ____

33. **How closely does the socio-economic background of the board members reflect that of the school catchment?**

Totally	Partially	Hardly at all
—	—	—
—	—	—

34. **To what extent does the board become involved in day to day decisions affecting the school.**

A great deal	Quite a lot	Only a little	Not at all
—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—

35. **Has the school board lobbied the Regional Council on behalf of the school?**

Yes, regularly	Yes, on occasion	No, not at all
—	—	—
—	—	—

36. **Has the school board lobbied any other body on behalf of the school? Please specify**

.....

Yes, regularly	Yes, on occasion	No, not at all
—	—	—
—	—	—

37. **How often do you meet with the board?**

38. **Does the board work with the PTA?**

	Yes	No
	—	—
If yes, on what kind of issues	—	—

39. **Do you work with the PTA?**

	Yes	No
	—	—
If yes, on what kind of issues	—	—

40. **Generally speaking, do you think that parents are adequately represented by these bodies?**

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

41. **How would you explain a lack of parental involvement in education decision-making? Tick as many as you feel appropriate**

Insufficient channels	Apathy	Futility	Satisfaction	Lack of knowledge
—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—

42. **Please rank those ticked**

43. **To what extent do board members respect the opinions/experience of staff?**

Almost always	In the majority of occasions	On some matters, but not others
—	—	—
—	—	—

Seldom	Never
—	—
—	—

44. On a scale of 1 - 10 (eg. very interested - 10; not interested - 1), to what extent do you think that:

a) parents are interested in how the school spends money? _____

b) parents want more say in staffing decisions? _____

c) parents want more say on the curriculum? _____

d) parents should have more say on the curriculum? _____

e) parents have more say than they did ten years ago? _____

f) their input is important to the management of the school? _____

g) their input is important to the quality of education in the school? _____

45. Do you think that there could be demand for your school to opt out in the foreseeable future?

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

46. Do you think more money would be invested in the school if it opted-out?

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

47. Do you think this would continue after opting-out?

Yes	No
—	—
—	—

48. In general, what would you anticipate to be the main advantages of opting-out?

49. In general, what would you anticipate to be the main disadvantages of opting-out?

50. How would you respond to the following statements?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
a)	The local councillor now has less say in day-to-day decisions affecting the school.					
b)	Parental choice has been a good thing for parents and pupils.					
c)	The loss of pupils through placing requests has threatened the educational viability of some schools.					
d)	The market principles on which Parental Choice is based have produced competition between Glasgow Schools.					
e)	There has been a general increase in the quality of education on the whole as a result of Parental Choice.					
f)	The closure of schools in some localities has had a negative effect on the educational attainment of pupils in those areas.					
g)	The school is an important focus of the local community.					
h)	The school board plays an important part in decisions made affecting the school.					
i)	Parents are generally not as interested in their child's education as they should be.					
j)	The increase in the range of education providers resulting from opting-out will enhance the quality of education as a whole.					

51. Which initiatives in the last decade have had the biggest say in increasing headteacher power?

52. What effect have the following had on the quality of education provided in schools in general?

	Very Positive	Positive	None	Negative	Don't Know
Progress in teaching techniques/quality					
Government Schemes (Educational*)					
Government Schemes (Management*)					
Regional Decentralisation Schemes					
Parental Choice					
Parental Involvement					
Other (please specify)					

53. What effect have the following had on the management of schools in general?

	Very Positive	Positive	None	Negative	Don't Know
Progress in teaching techniques/quality					
Government Schemes (Educational*)					
Government Schemes (Management*)					
Regional Decentralisation Schemes					
Parental Choice					
Parental Involvement					
Other (please specify)					

*Educational - 5 to 14 Scheme, Curriculum Structure for Secondary Stages, etc.
*Management - School Boards, Opting-out, Performance League Tables, etc. - if one initiative has had particular significance please specify.

54. **Generally speaking, what are your feelings about the appropriateness of the volume and pace of change in the public education system during the last ten years?**

Many thanks for your assistance.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope.

SCHOOL BOARD QUESTIONNAIRE **SCHOOL** .....

This questionnaire is intended to gauge the attitudes of school board members to some of the recent developments in school management. Some questions relate specifically to the operation of school boards, whilst others consider more general developments in which board members are likely to have an interest. In each case, please tick the appropriate answer or provide fuller information where requested. Please return the completed questionnaire in the attached pre-paid envelope. **All responses will be kept strictly confidential.**

1. Which of the following topics have the board discussed during your time as a member?

	Usually	On Occasion	Never
The Curriculum			
School Budget			
Staffing Appointments			
Discipline			
Placing Requests			
School Buildings			
Opting-out			
Parental Involvement			
Parental Satisfaction with the School			
Parental Satisfaction with the Board			
Regional Policies (please specify)			
Government Policies (please specify)			

2. What do you consider to be your duties as a school board member?

3. Why did you become a school board member?

4. During the last year, how often have you been contacted by parents not on the board to bring up matters at a meeting?

>5 times	3 - 5 times	1 - 2 times	Never	Not during the last year, but I have in the past.
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

5. How do you liaise with parents on school board decisions?

6. How accurately does the make-up of the board reflect the socio-economic circumstances of the wider parent body at your school?

Totally	Largely	Only a Little	Not at All	Don't Know
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

7. How do you feel about the range of activity the board can become involved in?

Too Broad	About Right	Insufficient Say on Key Matters	Haven't Really Thought About It
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

8. Are there areas you would like more say in?

[ ]	[ ]
Yes (please specify)	No

9. What involvement do you have in the day to day running of the school?

A Great Deal	Quite a Lot	Not Very Much	None at All
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

10. How often do you accept the opinions of the headteacher in the following areas?

	Always	On Most Occasions	On Some Matters, but not others	Hardly Ever	Never
Curriculum					
Buildings/Budget					
Placing Requests/Parental Involvement					
Regional/Govt. Policies					
Discipline					

11. Would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
a. Parents are generally happy with the work of the board.					
b. Parents are not as interested as they might be in the board.					
c. The board regularly consults parents.					
d. Parents tend to approach the headteacher rather than the board.					
e. The board represents the school in the community.					
f. The board represents the community in the school.					
g. The board is limited in its powers.					
h. Board members tend to be community activists.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
I. Boards give board members a say in the running of the school.					
j. Boards give parents as a whole a say in the running of the school.					

12. What role does the board have in the budget process? (Tick as many as applicable)

Design of the Budget	Agreeing the Budget	Monitoring the Budget
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

13. Do you think parents feel adequately represented by the board?

Yes [ ]

No [ ] Why not?

14. Have you ever received complaints from parents about the way the board works or a decision that has been made?

Yes [ ] On what sorts of issues?

No [ ]

15. Have you ever lobbied the Regional Council on behalf of the school or parents?

Yes, regularly	Yes, on occasion	No
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

16. Do you have any contact with your local Regional Councillor?

Yes, (s)he attends board meetings [ ]

Yes, through the Local Area Committee [ ]

Yes, through other formal meetings [ ]

Yes, informally [ ]

No, not at all [ ]

17. Have you ever lobbied any other body on behalf of the school or parents?

[ ] Yes (please specify)

[ ] No

18. In what ways does the board benefit parents?

19. In what ways does the board benefit pupils?

20. Does the board ever delegate functions to other bodies (e.g. PTA, headteacher)?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

21. Does the Regional Council ever delegate responsibility for certain issues directly to the board?

[ ] Yes. What sorts of issues?

[ ] No

22. Are you aware of the board taking decisions in your time with which a sizeable minority of parents disagree?

[ ] Yes. On what types of matters?

[ ] No.

23. Do the views of the board generally conform to those of parents?

Always	Usually	Seldom	Never	Don't Know
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

24. What can parents do if they are unhappy with the board?

25. In your opinion, are parents generally happy with the quality of education provided by the school?

Very Happy	Quite Happy	Satisfied	Not Very Happy	Unhappy
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

26. Do you think there is a lack of parental involvement in Education?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

27. If yes, how would you explain this? Please tick as many as you feel are applicable.

		Rank (1 - 6, with 1 being the most important)
[ ]	Apathy	[ ]
[ ]	Futility	[ ]
[ ]	Insufficient channels to get involved	[ ]
[ ]	Satisfaction with the school	[ ]
[ ]	Satisfaction with the board	[ ]
[ ]	Lack of knowledge	[ ]

28. Were there school board elections last time around?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

29. In a range of 1 -10, from accurate to inaccurate, how do the following statements apply to your board?

a. The board is mainly concerned with ensuring the school does what the Regional Council expects. _____

b. The board acts as a forum for local ideas. _____

c. The board supports school staff and trusts in their experience. _____

d. The board acts as an intermediary between the Region and the school. _____

e. The board acts as an intermediary between parents and the school. _____

f. The board conforms to the interests of parents. _____

g. Board members quite often take different views on the same issue. _____

h. Board members are usually parents who are most likely to get involved in other local issues. _____

I. Board members come from the same backgrounds as most of the local parents. _____

30. Why do you think parents make placing requests? Tick as many as you feel are applicable.

		Rank (1 - 6, with 1 being the most important)
[ ]	Disciplinary reasons	[ ]
[ ]	Attainment levels	[ ]
[ ]	The background of other pupils	[ ]
[ ]	School ethos (uniform, name, tradition)	[ ]
[ ]	Pupil preference	[ ]
[ ]	Quality of teachers	[ ]

31. Do you agree in principle with the idea of placing requests?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No. Why not?

32. Do you think that parents have a sufficient range of educational experiences to choose from?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

33. What benefits do placing requests offer parents?

34. Do you perceive there to be any disadvantages for parents/pupils/schools?

35. Has the Region's Delegated Management of Resources Scheme (DMR) increased your say in the budget process?

[ ] Yes. In what way?

[ ] No

[ ] Don't Know

36. How will the devolution of decisions about staff appointments to school level affect you?

[ ] It will mainly be an issue for headteachers

[ ] I anticipate far greater input by the board

[ ] Don't Know

37. How will this devolution benefit parents and pupils?

38. Do you see the school opting-out in the foreseeable future?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Don't Know

39. What benefits do you see in opting-out?

40. What disadvantages do you see in opting-out?

41. What initiatives do you think have had the greatest effect on the school in your time on the board?

42. Generally speaking, how happy are you with the changes imposed on the way the school works by:

	Very Happy	Happy	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Unhappy
The Headteacher					
The Regional Council					
The Government					

(over)

For analytical purposes, it would be helpful if you could answer the following Profile Questions prior to returning the completed questionnaire.

a) **How long have you served on the board?**

____ Years _____ Months

b) **Sex** **[ ] Male**

[ ] Female

c) **Age** **_____ Years**

d) **Occupation** **_____**

e) **Are you a member of any other local groups? Please specify.**

f) **Are you a member of a political party? (Do not specify which party)**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

g) **Do you normally vote in local council elections?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

h) **What are the first 3 digits of your postcode?**

_____ (e.g. G42)

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE YOU HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESEARCH EXERCISE.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to:

Derek Stewart,
Department of Geography,
University of Glasgow,
Glasgow,
G12 8QQ.

Appendix 8.1 - Parent Questionnaire

PARENT SURVEY **School ..... Child's Year .....**

The following short list of questions form part of a research exercise being undertaken within the Department of Geography at Glasgow University. Permission to undertake the study has been given by the Regional Council and the headteacher. Several Glasgow schools are being included in the study aimed at assessing parent attitudes towards recent initiatives in education management. Please tick what you feel to be the appropriate answer in each case and return the completed form to the school via your child. Responses will be considered by the University and not the school.
All responses will be treated confidentially.

1. Are you a member of the school board?

[ ] Yes. How long have you been a member? ..... years ..... months.

[ ] No.

2. Have you ever considered becoming a member of the school board?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No, not interested

[ ] No, wouldn't know how

3. Are you a member of the Parent Association or Parent Teacher Association?

[ ] Yes. How long have you been a member? ..... years ..... months.

[ ] No.

4. Have you ever contacted the school board?

[ ] Yes. Regarding which of the following:

[ ] The curriculum [ ] The way the school spends money

[ ] Discipline [ ] The school building or equipment

[ ] Placing requests [ ] Opting out

[ ] Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the school

[ ] Government or Regional Council policies

[ ] Parental involvement in decisions taken in the school [ ] Other matters

[ ] No

5. If you answered 'yes' to the last question, how often have you contacted the board during the last two years?

[ ] once or twice [ ] three to six times [ ] more than six times

6. **Has the board ever contacted you?**

[ ] Yes, in person

[ ] Yes, through a newsletter or standard letter

[ ] No

7. **Do you know any of the parents on the school board well enough to speak to?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

8. **Would you know how to contact the school board if you had to?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

9. **In which of the following areas do you think the board can become involved?**

[ ] The school budget

[ ] Decisions about which teachers to employ

[ ] The curriculum

[ ] School discipline

[ ] Maintenance of buildings

[ ] Other, please specify .....

10. **How do you feel about the say you have in the running of the school?**

	Too much	About right	Would like more	I don't have a say	Don't Know
Council policies on schools					
The school budget					
Which teachers to employ					
The curriculum					
School discipline					
Maintenance of buildings					
School meals					
School cleanliness					

11. **Have you ever contacted the headteacher about an issue of general importance to the school?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

12. **Have you ever made a placing request?**

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

13. **If 'yes', which of the following factors were significant in your decision?**

Please rank in order of importance (1-6)

[ ]	Distance from home	[ ]
[ ]	Exam results	[ ]
[ ]	Fellow pupils	[ ]
[ ]	Discipline	[ ]
[ ]	Uniform or school tradition	[ ]
[ ]	Other. Please specify	[ ]

14. **Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
a) Schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.					
b) I am happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.					
c) The school board adequately expresses parents' views.					
d) The school keeps parents fully informed as to what is happening.					
e) The school listens to parents and responds to their concerns.					
f) I don't really know what the school board does.					

15. **Which of the following would you contact if you were unhappy with something general in the school? (Tick as many as you think appropriate).**

		In which order (1, 2, 3 .....)
[ ]	School board	[ ]
[ ]	Headteacher	[ ]
[ ]	Director of Education	[ ]
[ ]	Local Councillor	[ ]
[ ]	Local Member of Parliament (MP)	[ ]
[ ]	Other. Please specify	[ ]

16. **For analytical purposes, it would be helpful if you could answer the following Profile Questions prior to returning the completed questionnaire.**

a) **How long have you lived in the area (or within easy walking distance of your current home)?**

_____ **Years** _____ **Months**

b) **Number of children in your family** _____

c) **Are you a single parent?** [ ] **Yes** [ ] **No**

d) **Occupation of main earner (state actual job or unemployed):**

_____

e) **Are you a member of any local community groups (e.g. community council, tenants association, residents group, area liaison committee, etc.)?**

[ ] **Yes**

[ ] **No**

f) **Are you a member of a political party? (Do not specify which party)**

[ ] **Yes**

[ ] **No**

g) **Do you normally vote in local council elections?**

[ ] **Yes**

[ ] **No**

h) **What are the first 3 digits of your postcode?(e.g. G42)** _____

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Appendix 8.2 - List of Correlations by School

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE VARIABLES: MUNRO

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 5% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL.

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Contact from the Board.
2. Whether or not they have made a placing request.

Single parent with:-

1. Contact from the Board.
2. Knowledge of how to contact the Board.
3. Having made a placing request.
4. Membership of community groups.

Membership of Community Groups with:-

1. Having made a placing request.

Having made a placing request with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.

Contact with the Head Teacher with:-

1. Their opinion on whether the School Board adequately expresses parents' views.

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 10% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Length of residence with:-

1. Contact from the School Board.
2. Their opinion on their say in the running of the school budget.
3. Whether they have made a placing request.

Being a single parent with:-

1. Their opinion on their say in school discipline.
2. Contact with the Head Teacher.
3. Their opinion on whether the school listens to parents and responds to their concerns.

Having made a placing request with:-

1. Their opinion on whether they are happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.

Contact with the Head Teacher with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion about their say in the maintenance of school buildings.
3. Their opinion about whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

PHI/CRAMER TESTS

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion about their say in the curriculum.
3. Their opinion about their say in school discipline.
4. Whether they have contacted the Head Teacher.
5. Their opinion on whether the School Board adequately expresses parents' views.

Length of residence with:-

1. Their opinion about their say in council policies on schools.
2. Their opinion about their say on school cleanliness.

Whether or not they are a single parent with-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion about their say in the curriculum.
3. Whether they really know what the School Board does.

Membership of Local Community Groups with:-

1. Their opinion on their say in the school budget.
2. Their opinion about their say on the curriculum.
3. Their opinion about their say on the maintenance of the school buildings.
4. Their opinion about their say on school meals.
5. Their opinion about their say on school cleanliness.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Their opinion about their say on the curriculum.

Contact with the Head Teacher with:-

1. Their opinion about their say in school cleanliness.
2. Their opinion about whether they are happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.
3. Their opinion about whether the school keeps parents fully informed as to what is happening.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE VARIABLES: CAMERON

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 5% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL.

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Knowledge of how to contact the School Board.
2. Their opinion on whether the School Board adequately expresses parents' views.
3. Their knowledge of what the School Board does.

Membership of a Community Group with:-

1. Contact with the Board.
2. Contact from the Board.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Being a single parent.
3. Occupation of main earner.

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 10% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Length of residence with:-

1. Contact from the Board.
2. Knowledge of parents on the Board.
3. Knowledge of how to contact the Board.

Membership of Community Groups with:-

1. Knowledge of how to contact the Board.
2. Their opinion on whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.
3. Their opinion on whether they are happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Knowledge of how to contact the School Board.
2. Length of residence.

PHI/CRAMER TESTS

Occupation of the main earner with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion on their say in Council policies on schools.
3. Their opinion on their say in the school budget.
4. Their opinion on their say in the curriculum.
5. Their opinion on their say in school discipline.
6. Their opinion on their say on the maintenance of school buildings.
7. Their opinion on their say on school meals.
8. Their opinion on their say in school cleanliness.
9. Whether they have made a placing request.

Length of residence with:-

1. Their opinion on their say in Council policies on schools.
2. Their opinion on their say in which teachers to employ.
3. Their opinion on their say in school meals.
4. Their opinion on their say in school cleanliness.

Whether they are a single parent with:-

1. Their opinion on their say in the curriculum.
2. Contact with the Head Teacher.
3. Whether they have made a placing request.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Their opinion on their say in the school budget.

Contact with the Head Teacher with:-

1. Contact with the School Board.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE VARIABLES: ROSS

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 5% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL.

Length of residence with:-

1. Their knowledge of what the School Board does.

Whether they are a single parent with:-

1. Their knowledge of what the School Board does.

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 10% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Their knowledge of what the School Board does.

PHI/CRAMER TESTS

Occupation of the main earner with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion regarding their say on Council policies on schools.
3. Their opinion on their say on the school budget.
4. Their opinion on their say on which teachers to employ.
5. Their opinion on their say in school cleanliness.
6. Their opinion on whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.
7. Their opinion on whether they are happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.
8. Their opinion on whether the school listens to parents and responds to their concerns.

Length of residence with:-

1. Contact with the Head Teacher.
2. Their opinion on whether the school keeps parents fully informed as to what is happening.

Whether they are a single parent with:-

1. Contact with the School board.
2. Their opinion on their say in Council policies on schools.
3. Their opinion on their say in the school budget.
4. Their opinion on what teachers to employ.
5. Their opinion on their say in the curriculum.
6. Their opinion on their say on school discipline.
7. Their opinion on their say in the maintenance of school buildings.
8. Contact with the Head Teacher.
9. Their opinion on whether the school listens to parents and responds to their concerns.

Local Community Group Membership with:-

1. Contact with the School Board.
2. Knowledge of how to contact the School Board.
3. Their opinion on which teachers to employ.
4. Their opinion on whether they are happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Contact with the School Board.
2. Contact from the School Board.
3. Their opinion on their say in Council policies on school.
4. Their opinion on their say in the school budget.
5. Their opinion on their say in which teachers to employ.
6. Their opinion on their say on the maintenance on school buildings.
7. Contact with the Head Teacher.
8. Their knowledge of what the School Board does.

Contact with the Head Teacher with:-

1. Contact with the School Board.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE VARIABLES: FRAZER

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 5% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL.

Community Group Membership with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion that schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

Head Teacher contact with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Knowledge of how to contact the School Board.

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 10% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Their opinion that schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

Length of residence with:-

1. Their opinion that they were happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.

Head Teacher contact with:-

1. Their opinion that they were happy to leave decisions about education to the professionals.

PHI/CRAMER TESTS

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Their opinion about their say in the running of the school budget.
2. Their opinion about their say in the curriculum.
3. Their opinion about their say in school discipline.
4. Their opinion about their say in the maintenance of buildings.
5. Whether they have made a placing request.

Length of residence with:-

1. Contact with the School Board.
2. Contact from the School Board.
3. Their opinion about whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

Community Group Membership with:-

1. Contact from the School Board.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Their opinion that schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.
2. Their opinion about whether the school listens to parents and respond to their concerns.

Head Teacher contact with:-

1. Their opinion about their say in the school budget.
2. Their opinion about their say on which teachers to employ.
3. Their opinion about their say in school discipline.
4. Their opinion about whether the School Board adequately expresses parents' views.
5. Their opinion about whether the school listens to parents and responds to their concerns.
6. Whether they really know what the School Board does.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN QUESTIONNAIRE VARIABLES: KEITH

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 5% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL.

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Their opinion on whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

Whether or not they are a single parent with:-

1. Knowledge of how to contact the School Board.

CHI SQUARE TESTS AT THE 10% SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL

Length of residence with:-

1. Their opinion on whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

PHI/CRAMER TESTS

Occupation of main earner with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.

Length of residence with:-

1. Their opinion on their say in school discipline.
2. Their opinion on their say in the maintenance on school buildings.
3. Their opinion about their say on school meals

Whether you are a single parent with:-

1. Membership of local community groups.

Membership of Local Community Groups with:-

1. Contact from the Board.
2. Their opinion on their say in school cleanliness.
3. Their opinion on whether schools are too similar to offer parents real choice.

Whether they have made a placing request with:-

1. Knowledge of parents on the School Board.
2. Their opinion about their say in the school budget.

Contact with the Head Teacher with:-

1. Contact with the Board.
2. Contact from the Board.
3. Their opinion about their say on school meals.
4. Their opinion about their say on schools being too similar to offer parents real choice.
5. Their opinion on whether the school keeps parents fully informed as to what is happening.
6. Their opinion on whether the school listens to parents and responds to their concerns.